



*Camaraderie Through Service*



2020

Revision of Rules

EXCOM's Proposed Changes to the Existing Rules (04 Oct 19) are **Highlighted**



## **The Association of Retired Commissioned Officers**

### **Proposed Revised Rules**

#### **Introduction**

1. **Title.** The title of the Association shall be “The Association of Retired Commissioned Officers” (ARCO), or in Irish, “Cumann Na nIar-Oifigeach Coimisiúnta”, and hereafter in the rules shall be referred to either as ARCO, or the “the Association”.
2. **Motto.** ARCO’s motto is *Camaraderie Through Service*, or in Irish *Cairdeas Trí Sheirbhís*.
3. **Rules.** ARCO Rules shall be available on its website. The Rules shall also be made available, on request, to individual members of the Association.
4. **Aim.** Representing retired commissioned officers of the Permanent Defence Force, ARCO encourages and fosters the unique fellowship and comradeship established during military service, and promotes and protects the interests and needs of members, and eligible spouses or civil partners, within its competencies.
5. **Objectives.** While maintaining a positive image of the Association, and reflecting retired commissioned officers’ values and ethos, which derive from service in the Defence Forces, the following internal and external objectives shall be implemented:
  - a. **Internal Objectives**
    - (1) Promotes, defends and protects the rights, interests, quality of life, services, and welfare of retired officers, and eligible spouses, or civil partners.
    - (2) Supports the protection, relevance and improvement of members’ and eligible spouses’ or civil partners’ pensions and secondary benefits.



- (3) Advises and assists, within its competencies, members and eligible spouses, or civil partners on pensions and pension related matters.
- (4) Monitors change, coordinates advice and provides general support, thus enabling members to benefit fully from opportunities following early or age-related retirement.
- (5) Provides a forum for analysis and debate, and the formulation of responses to anticipated developments that may impinge on the lives of retired officers, and eligible spouses or civil partners.
- (6) Facilitates mutual support, networking opportunities and social occasions, for both retired officers and for those who remain active in the workplace, thus maintaining a fruitful bond with colleagues, in sharing talents and interests for their common benefit.
- (7) Ensures that the particular needs of officers retiring without a pension entitlement are catered for in a meaningful way, and that such officers enjoy parity of esteem within the Association with all other members.
- (8) Conducts an effective internal and external communication strategy by means of regional meetings, social media, website, biannual newsletter and text-a-message service.
- (9) Organises events and activities supporting ARCO's objectives and members' interests.

**b. External Objectives**

- (1) Establishes and maintains pro-active involvement with kindred organisations and agencies, in order to collectively engage in public advocacy and political lobbying, on issues relevant to retired officers.
- (2) Engages with Government Ministers, Government Departments and Agencies on pensions, pension related issues, and enhanced services for retired officers, and eligible spouses or civil partners.
- (3) Presents, within its competencies, presentations, submissions and statements on appropriate issues including Defence, Foreign Affairs, National Security, Veteran's Policy, Veterans' Strategy, Remuneration, Pensions and Welfare.



- (4) Advocates, using appropriate means, on behalf of the Defence Forces, its personnel, its veterans, and the families of serving personnel.
- (5) Conducts separate meetings on an annual basis with both the Minister for Defence and the General Staff, and on a quarterly basis with both the Department of Defence and RACO.
- (6) Fosters professional excellence within the Defence Forces through the sponsorship of an award for the Best Student on Army, Naval Service and Air Corps Cadet Courses, and by supporting Defence Forces Mentoring Programme.
- (7) Promotes effective and efficient liaison, coupled with mutual support and unity of effort, with ONE, IUNVA, RACO and PDFORRA, on matters of mutual interest.
- (8) Provides a member of ARCO's Executive Committee to the Defence Forces Benevolent Fund's Executive Committee, to CAOGA's Board of Management, and to the Council of the Alliance of Retired Public Servants.
- (9) Participates in, or represents retired officers at State and Defence Forces ceremonial events, both at National, Regional and Local levels.

## **Membership**

6. **Categories of Membership.** Membership of the Association shall fall under one category namely ordinary members.
7. **Membership**
  - a. Membership of ARCO shall be confined to former Commissioned Officers of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF), subject to the approval and election by the Executive Committee (EXCOM).
  - b. The control and direction of the Association's policy and affairs, subject to the provision of ARCO's Rules, shall be vested in the members, as expressed in motions adopted at the Association's Annual General Meeting.
  - c. A candidate for membership shall complete the necessary application form, either in hard copy or electronically, and once approved and elected by the EXCOM, shall be required to abide with ARCO's Rules and pay the annual



membership subscription.

8. **Membership Register.** ARCO's Membership Secretary shall maintain a register of members, which will include, as appropriate, home address, email address and telephone number(s). Usage of this personal data and information shall be strictly in accordance with ARCO's Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

9. **Termination of Membership**

- a. A member shall cease to be a member of ARCO, once a written letter of resignation has been received by the Association's Secretary. Subscriptions shall not be reimbursed on resignation.
- b. Following a formal written warning from the Secretary, the membership of a member whose subscription is in arrears for more than 18 months, shall be terminated.
- c. ARCO's EXCOM shall have the power to sanction or suspend any member whose conduct, either inside or outside the Association, is or has been, in the EXCOM's opinion, injurious to the character, ethos, interests or objectives of ARCO.
- d. A suspended member shall not be eligible to enjoy the privileges of the Association.

10. **Termination of Membership by Expulsion**

- a. The EXCOM shall have the power to expel any member of ARCO, whose conduct is deemed to have brought the Association into disrepute, or who has acted in a manner inimical to ARCO's aim and objectives.
- b. A majority of two thirds of the EXCOM shall be necessary to initiate the expulsion of a member.
- c. Any member who is being recommended for expulsion shall be given 28 day's notice in writing of the reason(s) of the proposed expulsion. This notification will be sent by registered post by the Secretary, to the member's last known address.
- d. Such a member shall be entitled to make a written or oral submission to the EXCOM, at a meeting specifically convened for this purpose.



- e. Prior to any EXCOM decision to expel a member, the Secretary shall inform the member, in writing, of a right to appeal the decision to an independent Appeals Panel consisting of ARCO's Trustees. The Appeals Panel decision shall be final, and will be communicated in writing to the Secretary, for onward delivery by registered post to the member.
- f. Upon expulsion, a member shall forfeit, ipso facto, all rights and claims on the Association.

## **Governance**

11. **Trustees**. Three ARCO members, duly elected at an AGM, shall fill the role as the Association's Trustees. The Trustees shall not be members of the EXCOM, but shall have the right of audience in matters associated with the trusteeship. The Trustees shall form an Appeals Panel to hear any appeal from a member whose membership the EXCOM is proposing to terminate by expulsion.
12. **Officers**. The officers of the Association shall comprise of:
  - a. The President,
  - b. The Vice President,
  - c. The Secretary,
  - d. The Treasurer,
  - e. The Membership Secretary, and
  - f. The Immediate Past President of the Association – initially for a one-year period.
13. **Functions of Officers**. In addition to the specific functions prescribed for ARCO's Officers, the EXCOM shall implement other functions on the President's direction.
  - a. **President**
    - (1) Preside at General Meetings and EXCOM meetings.
    - (2) Direct the EXCOM in the governance and management of ARCO.
    - (3) Represent the Association.
    - (4) Shall wear the ARCO Chain of Office at all official engagements.
  - b. **Vice President**



- (1) Represent the President when required.
- (2) Chair General Meetings and EXCOM meetings in the absence of the President.

c. **Secretary**

- (1) Convene all General Meetings and EXCOM meetings, perform the associated administrative and logistical functions, and issue the draft agenda for all such meetings at least 7 days before each meeting.
- (2) Make, distribute and preserve minutes of all proceedings of General Meetings and EXCOM meetings.
- (3) Conduct the Association's general correspondence.
- (4) Manage and maintain the Association's internal and external electronic and hard copy correspondence.
- (5) Correspond with the Association's membership on relative issues falling under the remit of the Secretary.
- (6) Maintain, retain and preserve the Association's records, including attendance records.
- (7) Preside at EXCOM meetings in the absence of the President and Vice President.

d. **Treasurer**

- (1) Implement the financial management of the Association's finances including the operation of the Association's bank account(s).
- (2) Maintain accurate accounts and books.
- (3) Pay all expenditures as authorised by the EXCOM.
- (4) Prepare and present at all EXCOM meetings, financial statements, and other relevant financial information as may be required by the EXCOM.
- (5) Ensure, with the Auditor, that audited accounts are available for presentation at the Annual General Meeting.
- (6) Organise in conjunction with Pensions Section, Finance Branch, Department of Defence, the deduction of members' annual subscriptions from military pensions, and the subsequent transfer of members' subscriptions to the Association's bank account.
- (7) Liaise with those members who are paying subscriptions by means other than a deduction in military pensions.
- (8) Chair EXCOM meetings in the absence of the President, Vice President and Secretary in that order.

e. **The Membership Secretary**

- (1) Implement ARCO's membership campaign.



- (2) Securely compiles, maintains and retains the Association's membership data base, in line with ARCO's Data Privacy and Protection Policy.
  - (3) Provide membership statistics to the Annual General Meeting and all EXCOM meetings.
  - (4) [Merchandise - Spaceholder]
- f. **The Immediate Past President of the Association.** During the year immediately following presidency of ARCO, the Immediate Past President shall be entitled to attend all EXCOM meetings.

## **Executive Committee**

### 14. **Composition**

- a. The EXCOM shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Regional Representatives, all of whom shall be elected by ballot at an Annual General Meeting (AGM), and shall hold office until the next AGM. Two Regional Representatives shall be drawn from each of the former Brigade areas (East, South and West), the DFTC (Curragh), the Air Corps and the Naval Service.
- b. The EXCOM shall be representative of the cohort of retired officers and shall reflect an appropriate gender balance. The newly elected EXCOM shall take office on the day after the AGM.
- c. If a vacancy occurs in the office of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or Membership Secretary, a member of the Association, elected by a majority of the EXCOM, shall assume the office for the balance of the period up to the next AGM. Other EXCOM vacancies which occur after the AGM shall be filled by a vote of the EXCOM.
- d. The EXCOM shall have power to co-opt members to fill any EXCOM vacancies which may occur during its term of office. Such co-opted members shall serve for the remainder of the period of the EXCOM's term of office.
- e. The EXCOM may co-opt additional member(s) to perform specific functions at the direction of the EXCOM. Such co-opted member(s) shall remain on the EXCOM until the specific function for which the co-option was made has been completed, or until the remainder of the period of the EXCOM's term of office.



15. **Tenure of Office**

- a. With the exception of the President, the Association's Officers, shall be elected at the AGM and serve for one year, or until the next AGM whichever is the sooner. The Officers shall be eligible for re-election. The EXCOM shall nominate a member of ARCO for the post of President. The President shall be elected by the AGM and shall be limited to a term in office as President for a maximum period of three consecutive years.
- b. With the exception of the President, the maximum number of years that any officer of the Association may hold an officer appointment is five continuous years. In the event that there is difficulty in getting a replacement for an individual office holder, it is permissible for the current office holder to be re-elected on a year by year basis.
- c. Regional representatives on the EXCOM may serve continuously provided they are nominated with a proposer and seconder for a regional representative position for election at an AGM. The proposer and seconder must be from the region in which the representative wishes to represent.
- d. If there are several persons competing for a regional representative position, there shall be an election process within the region to select their representatives by majority vote. An officer of the EXCOM may be appointed to oversee regional elections if required.

16. **Nominations**. Nominations to fill vacancies for Officers, Regional Representatives, Trustees and Auditors, shall be sent in writing to the Secretary to arrive **at least 42 days** before the AGM. Nominees shall be members of the Association. All nominations shall be signed by the Proposer and Secunder, both of whom shall be ARCO members. The written consent of the Nominee shall accompany the nomination. A copy of each nomination, with the names of the Proposer and Secunder, shall be circulated to all members in advance of the Annual General Meeting.

17. **Responsibilities**

- a. The **governance and** management of ARCO shall be **vested** in the EXCOM who **shall be responsible to the entire membership to uphold the Association's Rules. The EXCOM shall effectively carry out its duties to achieve ARCO's objectives. The EXCOM shall have full authority and power to implement the business of the Association and to make decisions between AGMs and Emergency General Meetings (EGM).**



- b. The EXCOM shall be responsible for:
- (1) The effective and efficient running of the Association,
  - (2) The interpretation of the Rules of the Association,
  - (3) Managing the finances of the Association,
  - (4) Appointing a member of the EXCOM to be its Web Master,
  - (5) Appointing a member of ARCO to be its Social Media Manager,
  - (6) Directing and monitoring the work of Working Groups,
  - (7) Such other duties as from time to time may be decided by an AGM,
  - (8) The payment of legitimate, reasonable expenses incurred by members of the EXCOM in the necessary performance of ARCO duties,
  - (9) Preservation and deposit of ARCO's records,
  - (10) The EXCOM shall have power to call an Emergency General Meeting of the Association.

18. **Meetings of the EXCOM**

- a. The EXCOM shall meet not later than eight weeks after the AGM, and thereafter as required, but normally once per month, at a time and place as determined by the President in consultation with the Secretary.
- b. Where possible, at least seven days' notice of the meeting shall be given to all EXCOM members. Such notice shall include the draft Agenda for the meeting.
- c. The quorum for EXCOM meetings shall be six, including at least two Officers.
- d. Special meeting(s) of the EXCOM may be called by the President, or by a request by at least five EXCOM members, to discuss matters of importance to the membership. Such requests shall state the reason for convening the meeting. Normally, seven days' notice of the holding of such a special EXCOM meeting shall be given by the Secretary to all members of the EXCOM. The special meeting, once assembled, shall discuss the issue which



precipitated its calling. Other matters may also be discussed at the discretion of the President.

- e. The EXCOM shall have the power to conduct EXCOM meetings in virtual format by means of electronic communications technology.

19. **Working Groups.** The EXCOM may at any time appoint from the Association's membership, Working Groups. Such Working Groups shall conduct their business in accordance with guidance provided by the EXCOM. Working Groups will be chaired by a member of the EXCOM and report to the EXCOM.
20. **Voting at EXCOM Meetings.** Voting on motions which have been proposed and seconded shall be determined by a simple majority of those present, entitled to vote and actually voting. The Chairman shall have an ordinary vote, and in the case of equality of voting, shall have a casting vote.

## **Financial Provisions**

21. **ARCO's Funds.** The EXCOM shall have the sole control of the current finances and property of the Association, and shall regulate its expenditure. ARCO is a non-profit organisation. The Treasurer shall present a Financial Statement to all meetings of the EXCOM.
22. **Financial Year.** The financial year shall commence on the 01 August, and shall end on the 31 July.
23. **Annual Subscription**
  - a. An annual membership, of an amount laid down from time to time by the AGM, shall be payable by each member. The annual membership subscription shall become payable on 01 of August. A member whose subscription is not paid within 12 months of the day in which it was due (01 August) shall be deemed to be lapsed. A member whose subscription is in arrears for more than 18 months, following due process, the membership shall be terminated.
  - b. The Treasurer shall write to such a lapsed member, informing the situation and inviting corrective action. A lapsed member shall not enjoy the privileges of the association.
24. **Current and Saving Accounts.** The EXCOM shall have a current account in the name of ARCO, in a bank of its choice within the State. The EXCOM may invest any funds surplus to its annual requirements in a saving or investment accounts, also in the



name of ARCO. The Treasurer, subject to the approval of the EXCOM, shall use such methods of transacting ARCO business as are available, including internet banking, debit card and cheque book. Where payments are transacted by cheque, two signatories, from the four designated members, shall sign the cheque.

25. **Auditor.** On an annual basis, the financial affairs shall be subject to audit. An Auditor, not a member of the EXCOM, shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting to inspect the Association's books and other records, to audit the Association's accounts and balance sheet for the ensuing financial year, and with the Treasurer, present the said accounts, with such observations as deemed necessary, to the AGM as a true and accurate representation of the financial affairs of the Association.

### **General Meetings**

26. **Category of General Meetings.** ARCO's General Meetings shall fall under two categories: Annual General Meetings and Extraordinary Meetings.
27. **Voting at General Meetings.** At Annual General Meetings and Extraordinary General Meetings, only fully paid up members of ARCO shall be eligible to attend and vote. Each attending member shall have one vote at the relevant meeting. A vote shall be cast by the individual member at the meeting. In the case of equality of voting, the Chairman shall have a casting vote.
28. **Virtual General Meetings.** The EXCOM shall have the power to decide that a specific General Meeting shall be conducted in virtual format by means of electronic communications technology. Any temporary failure or disruption of electronic communications technology shall not invalidate a specific General Meeting, or any proceedings relating to the meeting.

### **Annual General Meetings**

29. **Date for the Annual General Meeting.** The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association shall be held in the month of October each year, or on any later date in that year to be specified by the EXCOM.
30. **Proceedings at AGMs.** The proceedings at AGMs shall include:
- a. Presentation of the President's Report,



- b. **Presentation of** the Secretary's Report,
  - c. **Presentation of** the Treasurer's Report and Accounts, such accounts **to bear the certificate and observations, if any, of the Auditor,**
  - d. **Presentation** of the Membership Secretary Report,
  - e. The Election of Officers, and Regional Representatives,
  - f. **Election of Trustees,**
  - g. **Appointment** of Auditor,
  - h. Motions and Amendment(s) to the Rules, and
  - i. Any other business.
31. **Addition or Amendments to Rules.** No new rule, or an amendment to an existing rule, shall be made except at an AGM. Notice in writing of any proposed new rule(s), or amendment(s), shall be given to the Secretary, at least **42** days before the date of the AGM. Additional rules, or amendments to existing rules, shall require the consent of two thirds majority of the members present and voting at the AGM. **Adopted modifications to the Association's Rules shall have effect on and from the date of the AGM at which they were adopted.**
32. **Motions from the Floor at an AGM.** A two thirds majority of those attending at an AGM shall be necessary to accept a motion from the floor.
33. **Quorum.** At any AGM, twenty of ARCO's total membership, including **two** Officers, shall constitute a quorum. In the event of a quorum not being reached **within twenty minutes of the announced starting time**, the President shall dissolve the meeting, and in consultation with the EXCOM, shall reconvene it on a suitable future date, at which time, the same number as attended when the AGM was originally scheduled shall constitute a quorum.
34. **Methods of Notification.** The Secretary shall issue written notification of the AGM to all members with at least **28** day's notice of the meeting. **Such written notification shall be circulated either by post or by electronic means, or by a combination of such means.** The notification for the AGM shall include the date, time and location of the AGM, the Agenda, any notices of motions received, and any proposal to instigate any changes to the Association's Rules.



35. **Motions.** A member who wishes to propose a motion to an AGM shall give notice thereof, in writing to the Secretary at least 42 days in advance of the meeting. Such motions shall be in hard copy, and shall be signed by the Proposer and Seconder. **The Proposer of a motion shall be present at the AGM.** A copy of all motions, including, if necessary, proposed amendment(s) to the Rules shall be circulated to all members in advance of the AGM.

### **Extraordinary General Meetings**

#### **36. Convening of Extraordinary General Meetings**

- a. The EXCOM may convene an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) at any time at its discretion, in order to discuss any matter deemed to be of utmost importance to the wider membership of ARCO. A decision to convene an EGM shall require a two third majority at the EXCOM meeting.
- b. On receipt by the EXCOM of a request to do so specifying the topic and signed by at least fifty members of ARCO an EGM shall be convened. In the event of the receipt of such a request, the EXCOM may only discuss matters germane to the request for the convening of the EGM. The EXCOM shall decide a date, time and location for the EGM to be held which must be within one month of the receipt of the requisition.

37. **Notification of EGMs.** The Secretary shall provide members, with at least fourteen days written notice of an EGM. Such notice shall specify the subject matter(s) to be discussed as well as the date, time and location of the EGM. The notification to members shall indicate whether the EGM has been convened on the initiative of the EXCOM, or by a request from at least fifty ARCO members.

38. **Proceedings of EGM.** Only the matter(s) specified by the EXCOM, or by at least fifty members, may be discussed at such at an EGM. EGMs shall be conducted in the same way as an AGM.

### **Miscellaneous Provisions**

39. **Data Protection and Privacy Policy.** **All personal data and information voluntarily provided by members to ARCO shall be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality. The purpose of the ARCO's Data Protection and Privacy Policy shall be to protect the rights, privacy and personal information of individuals in accordance with the Data Protection Acts, 1988 – 2003, and the European Union's**



General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). ARCO's Data Protection and Privacy Policy shall be available to members on request, and shall be posted on the Association's website.

40. **Communications**

- a. For effectiveness and value for money, the Association's means of communications shall be electronic mail, text-a-message, and postings on ARCO's website and social media platforms.
- b. Communication shall include newsletters, website and social media postings, notifications and general correspondence.
- c. The submission of an email address or a mobile telephone number, by a member shall be construed to mean that the said member accepts that these electronic means shall be the principal method of communication with the member.
- d. Notification of meetings of the EXCOM, and associated documentation shall be exclusively by electronic means.
- e. Newsletters, notifications, and any general correspondence to and from members may be distributed either by postal means or by email, at the discretion of the EXCOM.
- f. Requests for holding an Extraordinary General Meeting, nominations for election, and notices of motions, shall be submitted in hard copy to the Secretary.
- g. All correspondence from the Secretary to a member being considered for expulsion shall be by registered post.
- h. The Association's social media platforms shall be managed, monitored and controlled under the EXCOM's direction.

41. **Website.** ARCO's website shall provide an easily accessed on-line reference point for the communication of a range of material of interest to members, and the wider veterans' community. The website also provides an email facility whereby members, or other interested parties, may initiate contact with ARCO's elected officers. The website shall be managed by a Web Manager appointed by the EXCOM, who shall normally be a member of the EXCOM.

42. **Social Media Platforms.** ARCO's Social Media Platforms shall provide cost effective, innovative and efficient communications support for its membership, provide a marketing tool for the Association, and in parallel convey appropriate and relevant information to ARCO's membership and to the external community. The EXCOM shall appoint, from within ARCO's membership, a Social Media Manager.



43. **Club Merchandise.** Articles of ARCO's merchandise, such as plaques, ties, and lapel pins, shall only be provided to the Association's members, or at the sole discretion of the EXCOM, to external individuals or institutions.
44. **Arbitration.** In any dispute regarding the interpretation of these Rules, the Annual General Meeting shall be the final arbiter.
45. **Dissolution**
- a. A resolution to dissolve ARCO shall be proposed only at an Extraordinary General Meeting, whose sole purpose shall be the proposed dissolution of the Association.
  - b. The resolution shall require a majority of three quarters of the members present and voting. Dissolution shall take effect from a date fixed by the meeting.
  - c. The EXCOM shall be responsible for the winding up of the Assets and Liabilities of the Association and the archival of ARCO's records. Any property remaining after the discharge of the debts and liabilities of the Association shall be disposed of in accordance with the direction of the Extraordinary General Meeting.
46. **Adoption of Rules.** These Rules were formally adopted at ARCO's Annual General Meeting held on 02 October, 2020.

**END**