



Constitution of the National Board of Catholic Women

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Context of this Document

- (A) The National Board of Catholic Women (**NBCW**) was created as an unincorporated association in 1938 as a consultative body to the Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales and has revised its constitution from time to time, with the most recent being a version created and adopted at an Annual General Meeting (**AGM**) on 30 October 1971 and subsequently amended in minor ways up to the AGM on 12 February 2022.
- (B) In the light of the reduction in the number of national organisations of Catholic women and the reduced membership of those remaining the present constitution is no longer fit for purpose;
- (C) There is a desire to provide greater diversity and inclusion of Catholic women across England and Wales; and
- (D) The present members of the existing NBCW, having conducted a synodal review, and being committed to a synodal approach going forward, have determined to reconstitute the NBCW in accordance with the following Constitution.

IT IS AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Name, Structure and Assets

- 1.1. The Organisation created by this Constitution shall comprise an Executive Board and a Network of Members.
- 1.2. The Organisation created by this Constitution shall continue to be known as the National Board of Catholic Women (**NBCW**) which remains an unincorporated association of its Members.
- 1.3. All assets of the NBCW shall be held by the Executive Board on behalf of the Members.

2. Mission

- 2.1. The NBCW aims to promote the **communion** and **participation** of Catholic women in fulfilling Christ's **mission** by:
 - 2.1.1. creating a space for the diversity of women to be in Communion with one another;
 - 2.1.2. equipping women to fully participate in the Church's mission through formation and information; and
 - 2.1.3. ensuring the hopes and concerns of Catholic women are heard within the Church and society, and that women are involved in decision-making and action within the Church and society.

3. Membership

- 3.1. Any adult baptised Catholic woman may subscribe as a Member and she shall provide contact details including preferably an email address and Diocese, and shall pay to the Treasurer the annual subscription.
- 3.2. The Executive Board shall be elected from Members.
- 3.3. Members will be encouraged to gather in Diocesan groupings with the support of their Diocesan Links and Bishop.
- 3.4. Catholic Organisations based in England and Wales may also apply to be Group Members and their Catholic women members shall be treated as Members.

4. Relationship as a Consultative Body with The Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW)

- 4.1. CBCEW appoints an Episcopal Liaison to work with the NBCW.
- 4.2. Diocesan Bishops may appoint one or more women within their Diocese to act as Diocesan Link. Any Diocesan Links (not being Members in their own right) shall be treated as Members during any year in which their Diocese has made a financial contribution to the NBCW.
- 4.3. Diocesan Links shall encourage women in their Diocese to become Members and where possible facilitate local meetings of Members for purposes consistent with the Mission.
- 4.4. Diocesan Links shall endeavour to canvass the views and opinions of Members and other Catholic women on matters relevant to the Church so that these can be communicated and shared with the Bishops Conference and their Bishop and with other Members of the NBCW.

5. AGM and Meetings

- 5.1. An AGM shall take place annually and no later than 15 months after the previous AGM. The Episcopal Liaison and Members will be given advance notice of at least 6 weeks by publication of the date and time of the AGM which can be attended by electronic means such as Zoom.
- 5.2. The Executive Board shall meet regularly and the dates and times of its meetings shall be published in advance without prejudice to the possibility that urgent business may call for an additional meeting when notice need only be given to the Executive Board Members.

6. Executive Board

- 6.1. The number of Executive Board Members shall be no more than twelve. Half of Executive Board Members or a minimum of three, are required for a meeting of the Executive Board to be quorate.
- 6.2. The Executive Board Members shall be elected at an AGM by a simple majority vote of those present for a period of three years and may be re-elected once and must then stand down for at least a year.

- 6.3. Nominations for Executive Board Members shall be in writing signed by the nominee and two other Members and delivered to the President preferably no later than three weeks in advance of the AGM.
- 6.4. The Executive Board shall select from amongst their number:
 - 6.4.1. A President
 - 6.4.2. up to three Vice Presidents who are prepared to work collegially with the President and are prepared to serve as President if they have not yet done so
 - 6.4.3. A Treasurer
 - 6.4.4. An Executive Board Member responsible for the management of each of the Committee groups as set out in clause 7.2 below.
- 6.5. The duties of the above roles will be determined by the Executive Board and include the functions set out in this Constitution.
- 6.6. The Executive Board may appoint one or more persons as a self-employed contractor to be paid to assist the administration of the NBCW.
- 6.7. Executive Board Members selected for a named role under clause 6.4 above must be prepared to serve at least until the next AGM. An Executive Board Member may resign on written notice to the President during her term or in the case of the resignation of the President to all other Executive Board Members.
- 6.8. The Executive Board may co-opt one or more Members to fill a vacancy on the Executive Board and such co-opted Member will serve until the next AGM and may then submit to election.
- 6.9. Decisions of the Executive Board shall be by simple majority vote of those present at a meeting and the President shall have a casting vote in the event of a tie.

7. Leadership and Structure

- 7.1. The work of the NBCW shall be undertaken by Committees, the number of which shall be determined by the Executive Board.
- 7.2. The purpose of each Committee shall be consistent with the Mission and be directed to one of three functions set out below, which also identifies the committees as they exist at the date of this Constitution without any restriction on the Executive Board to re-organise, create, or dissolve any Committee from time to time

- 7.2.1. **Communion**- Creating a space for the diversity of women to be in Communion with one another *Interfaith/ Ecumenical/ International*
- 7.2.2. **Participation**- Equipping women to fully participate in the Churches mission through formation and information *Women in the Church + Education = Formation*
- 7.2.3. **Advocacy** - Ensuring the hopes and concerns of Catholic women are heard within the Church and society and that women are involved in decision-making and action *Social Responsibility/ VAWG/ Science, Health and Bioethics*
- 7.3. The Executive Board may create Task and Finish groups of Members for specific functions.
- 7.4. Each Committee shall have a Convenor who is a Member and is appointed for a fixed term and may be reappointed. The terms of the appointments shall be set out in writing. Conveners shall report to the Executive Board.
- 7.5. Membership of Committees shall be decided by the Executive Board in consultation with the Convenor.
- 7.6. The Executive Board may remove a Committee member or replace a Convenor and shall provide reasons for that decision.

8. Communication

- 8.1. The Executive Board shall administer a website at nbcw.co.uk (**Website**) and use such other channels of communication as are appropriate from time to time.
- 8.2. Minutes shall be published following all meetings of the Executive Board and of the Organisation.
- 8.3. The details of the membership of Committees shall be published.
- 8.4. The details of active Task and Finish groups, their function and a contact Member shall be published.
- 8.5. Members acknowledge that reasoned and necessary requests may be made for confidentiality in respect of certain discussions, spiritual conversations, and documents, but overall the activities of the Organisation shall be carried out with transparency.

9. External Relations

- 9.1. The NBCW may subscribe as a member of international Catholic Women's organisations.
- 9.2. Otherwise, the NBCW shall work with other Church organisations and secular women's organisations but may not be a paying member.
- 9.3. The NBCW shall encourage its Members and particularly Diocesan groups to cooperate with other church organisations whose details may be published.

10. Finance

- 10.1. The income of the Organisation shall be made up of subscriptions from Members, Group Members, voluntary contributions from Diocese, and a grant from CaTEW and any other available sources.
- 10.2. The minimum annual subscription to be paid by Members and Group Members shall be decided by the Executive Board and published on the website.
- 10.3. The finances of the Organisation shall be managed by online banking under the control of the Treasurer. The bank mandate for the Organisation's operational bank account shall name at least two active members of the Executive Board.
- 10.4. The Treasurer shall maintain an account of the income and expenditure of the Organisation. The accounts for each financial year shall be examined by a suitably qualified person and presented at the AGM, within 6 months of the end of the financial year.
- 10.5. The Executive Board, in consultation with the Convenors and Diocesan Links will compile and have oversight of the NBCW budget.
- 10.6. The Executive Board will share the budget for the following financial year and submit this to CaTEW at their request.
- 10.7. The budget shall provide for the expenses associated with the carrying out of the Mission and supporting the activities set out in this Constitution.
- 10.8. Unless by the prior decision of the Executive Board, no out of budget expenses shall be paid.

11. Amendments

- 11.1. This Constitution may be amended by a decision taken at an AGM after consultation with CBCEW.

12. Transitional Provisions

- 12.1. Where a person or Group Member has paid a subscription for the year in which this Constitution is made, they or their Catholic women members shall be treated as a Member.
- 12.2. This Constitution replaces the prior Constitution and Standing Orders.

13. Definitions

- 13.1. In this Constitution terms identified in the text in round brackets have the meaning established by the preceding text
- 13.2. CaTEW means the [Catholic Trust for England and Wales](#)
- 13.3. Church means the Catholic church.
- 13.4. Financial year means a calendar year unless varied by the Executive Board.
- 13.5. Executive Board means the members of the prior Executive as at the date of this Constitution who have signed this Constitution below or the Executive Board Members elected for the time being to the Executive Board in accordance with this Constitution.
- 13.6. Mission is defined in clause 2 above.
- 13.7. Committee means a group who work together to accomplish an aspect of the Mission as described in clause 7.4 above.
- 13.8. Publication means publication on the website.
- 13.9. Notice includes publication on the website.
- 13.10. Organisation means the organisation known as the NBCW created by this Constitution.

IN WITNESS whereof the continuing members as represented by the executive prior to the making of this Constitution who are now the Executive Board have signed below:

Amy Cameron

Jacintha Bowe

Margaret Clark

Barbara Cookson

Dorothy Dodoo

Susanne Kowal

Sophie Rudge

Abigail Macmillan

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