

## **AWNW Standing Orders**

The **Animal Welfare Network for Wales (AWNW)** is an independent, self regulated Network to facilitate and foster good relationships between all organisations working in Wales with an interest in animal welfare.

The Network is not a policy making body and as such will not 'represent' its member's views publicly.

For the majority of business, the AWNW will be a virtual Network. The bulk of information to be disseminated and exchanged will be done through the AWNW's own website [www.awnwales.org](http://www.awnwales.org). It is therefore the member's responsibility to keep their details up to date and check the website for information regularly.

One of the key functions of the Network is to provide information for the Third Sector Partnership Council (TSPC), on which the Network has a seat representing animal welfare.

### **Membership**

Membership of the Network is open to all organisations working directly or indirectly in animal welfare, with volunteers and/or staff working in Wales. An organisation's HQ does not have to be situated within Wales, however, organisations are encouraged to give a point of contact active in Wales

Membership is indicated when a survey is completed by an organisation and their details are held within the membership section of the website. Members are then bound by AWNW standing orders.

The Board reserves the right to query member information and to negotiate content. The final decision on membership will rest with the Board.

All Members are equal in status within the Network.

### **Members' Code of Conduct**

Once a member, all individuals are required to treat their fellow Network members with courtesy and respect.

The Network is designed to facilitate the dissemination of information amongst members and is not there to provide a public forum for an individual's, or organisation's, complaints.

There will inevitably be organisations within the Network who are diametrically opposed to one another, however the Network is not developing policy, only facilitating it and so all members must refrain from criticising another organisation's policies whilst at AWNW functions / meetings or on the AWNW website.

Any organisation criticising or denigrating another organisation or individual at the AWNW conference or other functions or on the member's own website with specific reference to the AWNW, will be subject to the Complaints Procedure (see below).

Any animal welfare organisation wishing to become a member of AWNW must have aims consistent with legislation governing animal welfare and not condone, permit, participate or be party to any illegal activity.

No individual with a conviction under the Protection of Animals Act 1911; the Animal Welfare Act 2006; any regulations under those Acts; or any other animal welfare-related offences, will be permitted membership to AWNW. Anyone refused access to AWNW on this basis may submit an appeal to the AWNW Board for their consideration.

Clearly these procedures do not bind individuals or organisations outside of AWNW business and as such members are free to campaign as their organisations see fit outside of the Network. However any reference to the Animal Welfare Network will constitute a breach of membership rules and will be subject to the Complaints Procedure.

## **Complaints procedure**

All members have agreed to the Code of Conduct, but it is still necessary to have a standing orders procedure that can deal with any complaints. This will in effect protect the integrity of the Network.

Members must feel protected and able to participate freely, however no one must be allowed to use the Network to launch any form of attack on another organisation or individual.

All Members are equal and entitled to this same protection offered by a Code of Conduct.

Should an AWNW member be found to have criticised or denigrated another organisation or individual at any form of AWNW event or on the website, that person or persons will be immediately subject to this procedure.

In such circumstance as laid out above, the Board will immediately:

- a) request an apology from the individual or organisation who has made the criticism. Should an apology not be forthcoming, then
- b) the organisation has 1 week to supply the apology in writing to the Board/Committee, which will be posted on the website. Any form of apology must be directed at the organisation or individual criticised and also to the Network as a whole. If no such apology is received then the Board/Committee will meet to discuss the details of the criticism made. The Board may then vote to exclude the individual or organisation temporarily or permanently from the Network.

## **Board**

The AWNW will be a virtual Network with the exception of the annual conference when members will be invited to meet to discuss relevant Network interests. As such there is a requirement to elect a Board or Committee to oversee the day-to-day running of the Network in order to make sure, for instance:

- a) that the Network remains independent,
- b) plans an annual conference where appropriate and,
- c) ensures the website is kept up to date.

Once a year a Board will be elected to oversee the management of the Network, communications and the website.

The Board will **not** be empowered to make any animal welfare policy decisions on behalf of the membership.

The Powers of the Board are strictly limited to what is laid out in these Standing Orders.

A Board of six network members will be elected to represent the Network. These individuals will be elected at each AGM for a term of two years (staggered at three Board positions per year). Three current Board members will step down for the 2009 AGM, so that three Board members are elected each year. Who will step down will be decided by an internal Board vote.

Remit will include:

- a) Planning the annual conference
- b) Administering the website
- c) Administering the funds
- d) Complaints procedure
- e) Review, revise and enforce Standing Orders.

Meetings will be held a minimum of six times a year.

For a meeting to be quorate there must be fifty percent of the board present in order for any votes to be legitimately passed.

If a Board member does not attend two of the scheduled Board meetings within a year, without valid reason submitted to the Board for consideration, they will be deemed to have resigned.

Minutes of all Board meetings will be taken and posted on the AWNW website.

## **Board Position Election Procedure**

At the first Board meeting following the Annual Conference, the elected members will elect from themselves the following Officer-ships:

- a) Chair
- b) 2 x Vice-Chairs
- c) Treasurer
- d) Membership Officer
- e) 2 x Deputy TSPC representatives
- f) Information Officer

In addition two of the seven members, other than (e), will be elected as the TSPC representative.

The RSPCA will provide a formal secretariat to the Network. The £4,000 a year grant awarded to the Network by the TSPC will go to the RSPCA to provide a member of staff for the Network, the RSPCA will continue to supplement as well as provide the resources for this role to function. In return the RSPCA will retain an ex-officio seat on the Board.

## **Annual Conference / AGM**

Where possible and within budget restrictions there should be an annual conference.

This conference will be held at an appropriate venue in Wales.

Notice of the conference date will be posted at least 2 months in advance.

Conferences must have the capacity to cater for at least one representative from each member organisation. Subject to funds the conference should be planned to allow for two representatives per organisation and a maximum of three, offered equally to the entire membership.

## **Annual Conference / AGM Elections Procedure**

All elections to the Board will take place at the annual conference.

A month before the annual conference each member organisation will be issued with a nomination form. This form must be submitted at the latest two weeks before the conference.

A member can self nominate but they must be seconded by three different member organisations.

At the annual conference, all members of the Network will be issued with a voting card. Only one per organisation will be issued.

All names validated for nomination (i.e. have the appropriate seconders) will be put to the whole membership for the vote. Members who have submitted the appropriate nomination may be elected in absentia.

At the conference, members will fill in their voting card with a maximum of six names they wish to see elected. Each name may only appear once on each card.

Through 'First Past the Post' six Board/Committee members will subsequently be elected.

Should there be less than six members elected to Board, or, should workload or special projects dictate, those who are elected may co-opt members from the Network membership up to a maximum of eight total members of the Board, and providing elected Board members remain the majority. All elected Board members must be unanimous when voting on a co-opted member.

Should a voting card be submitted with names appearing in duplicate or more, or invalid (i.e. not formally nominated) names, the card will be classified as spoilt and not counted amongst the votes.

## **Website / Communications**

The website [www.awnwales.org](http://www.awnwales.org) will be the main form of communication for the Network.

All relevant news, TSPC papers/links and consultations will be posted on the site.

All members of the Network will be listed under the membership section including a write-up on the organisation and the main contact details, as supplied by each member.

The website will have a 'My Network' section for members to post their news, consultation responses and anything else relevant to the Network. To do so, members need to email the administrator of the website and items will be posted as soon as possible afterwards: [contact@awnwales.org](mailto:contact@awnwales.org)

The Code of Conduct will also apply to the website. Any material submitted for posting must comply and no information intended to belie another organisation will be accepted. The Board/Committee will assess and decide upon any controversial submissions.

## **The Third Sector Partnership Council (TSPC)**

The Third Sector Partnership Council (TSPC) is a key body in maintaining regular dialogue between the voluntary sector and the National Assembly.

The Council consists of National Assembly Members and representatives appointed from the voluntary sector.

The Third Sector Partnership Council shall:

- advise on the implementation, monitoring and review of the Third Sector Scheme including establishing indicators by which the Scheme shall be evaluated
- facilitate consultation with relevant voluntary sector organisations and public sector bodies on the Scheme's implementation, operation and review
- advise on implementation and operation of the Scheme and prepare an annual report for consideration by the National Assembly
- propose arrangements for reviewing the Scheme after each ordinary election of the National Assembly and assist in the review process
- consider issues that relate to the implementation of the Scheme that affect, or are of concern to, the voluntary sector and make recommendations to the National Assembly
- consider issues that relate to the functions and responsibilities of the National Assembly that affect, or are of concern to, the voluntary sector and are wider than the responsibilities of a single subject committee, and make recommendations to the National Assembly.

To find out more, members should refer to the Network website [www.awnwales.org](http://www.awnwales.org) or the Assembly's website [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

The Animal Welfare Network for Wales (AWNW) has a seat on the TSPC. It is a chance for issues affecting those volunteers working in animal welfare to be heard and addressed, although it does not allow for issues specifically related to animal welfare. However the Third Sector Scheme does make provision for the various volunteering Networks, including the AWWN, to meet with Ministers and it is at these Forums that issues relating to animal welfare can be raised.

The Network therefore has responsibilities with regards the TSPC and so in respect of that:

- a) All TSPC papers or link will be available on the website in advance of the meetings providing they have been supplied by the Assembly within the agreed timetable.
- b) It is the responsibility of AWWN members to check the website for the forthcoming meeting's papers and to forward any comments to the TSPC representative within a reasonable timeframe.
- c) Any relevant information, with regards animal welfare, in TSPC meetings will be reported back to the AWWN via the website.
- d) The representative to the TSPC will be selected from the Board members.

The AWWN representative to the TSPC must be able to demonstrate they represent the diversity of the Network, such as three or more of the following:

- a) Domestic animal welfare
- b) Farm animal welfare
- c) Wild animal welfare
- d) Water mammals
- e) Fish / Aqua-culture
- f) Invertebrates & Reptiles

This is to ensure that all sectors are represented equally. The animal welfare sector is extremely diverse and the AWWN is in fact only an umbrella Network for in effect dozens of other Networks working on single issues, single species or single sectors. It is important to note however that this is only with regard the TSPC Council meetings. The Ministerial meetings are open to the wider membership. For more details contact the TSPC Co-ordinator at the Wales Council for Voluntary Action - 029 2043 1700.