

# **Frontline Freelance Register Constitution**

## **Article 1: Name and Legal Status**

1.1 The Frontline Freelance Register (hereafter referred to as FFR) was established in July 2013 by a group of freelance journalists and The Frontline Club Charitable Trust (hereafter referred to as FCCT).

1.2 FFR is an independent ring-fenced membership based organisation that forms part of the FCCT's charitable activities supporting freelance journalism.

1.3 FFR's strategy and activity is governed by a board of elected representatives chosen from its membership (see Art 7) however FCCT trustees retain overall fiscal and legal responsibility for FFR.

## **Article 2: Mission Statement**

2.1 FFR is a representative body and self-help group for freelance journalists designed to increase the efficacy and impact of their journalism. Its core mission is to advocate for the safety and welfare of freelance journalists who are exposed to risk in their work and to promote and recognise their critical role in the news-gathering industry.

## **Article 3: Objectives**

3.1 FFR has the following 4 core objectives:

- (i) Provide freelance journalists with a forum and representative body with a critical mass to lobby for change for the better treatment of freelance journalists.
- (ii) Support the physical and mental well-being of actively working freelance journalists who are exposed to risks in their work.
- (iii) Promote responsible newsgathering by freelance journalists which is consistent with industry established safety and ethical standards.
- (iv) Deliver an internationally recognised industry standard of professional quality for freelance journalists.

## **Article 4: Membership**

## 4.1 Membership criteria

4.1.1 FFR is a membership based organisation. It is open to freelance journalists who work in a country that is not their own and are exposed to risk in their work and who sign up to FFR's Code of Conduct (Appendix A)

4.1.2 FFR's Code of Conduct is central to its mission as it allows freelance journalists to demonstrate that they abide by responsible newsgathering which is consistent with industry established safety and ethical standards.

## 4.2 Classes of Membership

4.2.2 FFR offers two classes of membership, Full and Associate.

4.2.3 Full membership is fee based and is open to freelance journalists who meet FFR's criteria, who sign up to FFR's Code of Conduct, and hold up-to-date safety training certification and a reference from a colleague attesting to their professionalism while on assignment.

4.2.4 Associate membership is free and is open to freelance journalists who meet FFR's criteria and agree to abide by FFR's Code of Conduct.

## 4.3 Admission Procedure

4.3.1 Applications to join FFR are made through its website. Applications are processed on a monthly basis by the director of FFR. Any applications that are not straightforward will be referred to the board of representatives for their consideration on approval.

## 4.4 Code of Conduct and the Disciplinary Procedure

4.4.1 All members are required to abide by FFR's Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is divided into two sections. The first section covers safety conduct and the second covers journalism ethics.

4.4.2 Any alleged breach of the Code of Conduct is subject to review through FFR's Disciplinary Procedure (see Appendix B).

4.4.3 FFR's Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure are available to the public on FFR's website for transparency and accountability purposes.

4.4.4 Any additions or amendments to the Code of Conduct may be raised by a board member and agreed by the rest of the board members by an 80% majority.

## **Article 5: Funding**

5.1 FFR receives its funding from FCCT. It does not have the power to fundraise, operate a bank account, sign contracts or otherwise exercise any financial or legal transactions independently as it does not have legal personality or status.

5.2 FFR and FCCT will agree on a budget for its operating costs every 2 years and FFR will support FCCT in fundraising efforts to meet its budgetary requirements.

## **Article 6: Governance**

6.1 FFR is a representative body for freelance journalists run by freelance journalists through its Board of representatives (hereafter referred to as the Board)

6.2 The Board is responsible for the strategic direction of FFR. The Board approves key decisions and works collectively to secure the success of FFR in achieving its objectives.

6.3 The Board delegates the overall implementation of FFR's strategy and its activities to the Director, who is responsible for leading FFR and advising and guiding the Board on its key decisions.

6.4 The Board is comprised of 7 representatives. Article 7 below sets out the procedure for electing the Board representatives.

6.4.1 A quorum for transaction of business at any meeting of the board shall consist of a majority vote at the meeting, present in person, by proxy or by email. The Board meets every month apart from the months of August and December.

6.5 At the start of a new Board's term, the elected representatives will appoint a Chair. The principal role of the Chair is to provide leadership to the Board, to act as the direct liaison between FCCT's Trustees, the Board and the Director and to serve as the focal point for governance issues. Other powers may be delegated by the Board from time to time.

6.6 The Board, at its convenience, will establish an Advisory Committee (AC) which will meet at least twice a year and individual members of the AC can be requested by the Board to attend one or more Board meetings.

6.6.1 The AC's role is to provide advice and make recommendations to the Board in support of the development of strategy, policy and activities, with a view to informing the Board's prioritisation and decision-making. This will include the identification of future priorities and emerging opportunities.

6.6.2 The Board will select the composition of the AC including how many members it has, and it can add, replace or remove members by majority decision. The appointed members of the AC do not have to be chosen from the FFR membership, but they must have skills and experience working in one or more of the following fields: fundraising, communication, public relations, financial and business management, and legal services and media development.

6.6.3 The AC is not a legal entity, and will not have legal or contractual responsibility for the decisions taken by the Board.

6.7 The Trustees of FCCT are ultimately legally and fiscally responsible for the operations of FFR.

## **Article 7: Election of Board members**

7.1 The Board is elected by FFR's members every two years. Six of the seven board members are elected directly by FFR members and the candidates are chosen from its membership.

7.1.1 The seventh member of the Board is appointed by the FCCT Trustees in consultation with the Board and approved by the Board through majority vote. This arrangement will endure while FFR remains a project under the FCCT. If FFR devolves to be independent of FCCT (see Article 9 below), the arrangement under this sub-clause will no longer apply.

7.2 FFR's Director runs the elections and will launch an open call for FFR's members to nominate themselves as candidates.

7.3 To qualify as an elected candidate for FFR's Board, the candidate must meet the following criteria:

- (i) Have a minimum of 7 years' experience working as a freelance journalist
- (ii) Have good standing within the news and media industry for their work, this can include recognition received through being shortlisted, a finalist or a winner for a relevant industry award or a recipient of a prestigious fellowship or grant.
- (iii) Have relevant experience working or participating in journalistic or media organisations or initiatives

(iv) Not to have undertaken any action which has harmed or obstructed FFRs work or brought FFR into disrepute

7.4 Once the elections are completed, the Director will notify the successful candidates and invite them to establish the Board at the earliest convenience. Each new board members will be required to sign on to a separate board level code of conduct which will include a confidentiality clause. The Director will notify the membership of the new Board members.

### **Article 8: Amendment of Constitution**

8.1 Any part of this constitution may be amended, in part or whole, by the Board by unanimous vote.

### **Article 9: Devolvement and Dissolution**

9.1 FFR may be dissolved by a resolution passed by unanimous vote by the Board.

9.2 Either FFR or the FCCT Trustees may request devolvement from FCCT and for FFR to be run as an independent legal entity.

9.3 If the decision to devolve comes from FFR, it has to be agreed by unanimous vote by the Board following a consultation period with its membership.

9.4 If the decision to devolve comes from FCCT then FCCT must give the FFR board 6 months' notice in writing.