

INNOCENT

CONSTITUTION

1) Name

The name of the organisation shall be INNOCENT.

2) Aims

The aims of INNOCENT, which will function as an unincorporated association, are

- to prevent the wrongful criminal conviction of persons who have not committed the crime or crimes with which they have been charged;
- to overturn the convictions of persons who have not committed the crime or crimes of which they have been convicted;
- to raise awareness of the problem of miscarriage of justice and the wrongful conviction of those who are actually innocent.

3) Powers

INNOCENT shall have powers to

- a. assist individuals who claim to have been wrongly convicted of criminal offences in their attempts to overturn their convictions;
- b. assist the families, friends and supporters of those who claim to have been wrongly convicted of criminal offences in their attempts to overturn their convictions;
- c. investigate the cases of those who claim to have been wrongly convicted in order to establish whether it is able to assist the individuals concerned;
- d. prepare and make available to the public documents containing information about cases, the criminal justice system, and related matters;
- e. assist individuals who fear they may be under threat of being wrongly convicted of serious crimes;
- f. facilitate the formation of other groups with similar aims;
- g. hold at least ten meetings each year that are open to all members;
- h. participate in any federation of like minded organisations the aims of which are consistent with the aims of INNOCENT;
- i. raise money;
- j. open bank accounts;
- k. acquire and run buildings;
- l. take out insurance;
- m. employ staff ;
- n. establish committees, including a management committee, sub committees and/or working groups in pursuit of its aims;
- o. organise courses and events; and
- p. do anything that is lawful which will help it to fulfil its aims.

4) Membership

- a. Membership of INNOCENT shall consist of persons who attend its meetings and who supply names and contact information to INNOCENT.
- b. Membership shall take effect from the beginning of the meeting following the date on which they ask to become members.

- c. Membership will be open to any individual without regard to age, disability, political or religious affiliation, race, sex or sexual orientation who:
 - o wishes to help INNOCENT achieve any of its aims,
 - o is willing to abide by the rules of the INNOCENT, and
 - o is willing to pay any subscription which might be agreed at its meetings,but is not open to anyone who may profit financially through membership.
- d. Members of INNOCENT shall become entitled to vote in a meeting as from the date of their acceptance as members or on attaining the age of 16, whichever is the later.
- e. Membership of INNOCENT will lapse if a member does not attend any meeting for a year.
- f. The membership of any member may be terminated for good reason by a meeting of INNOCENT, provided that the member concerned shall have the right to be heard by a committee appointed at a meeting of INNOCENT, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

5) Meetings

- a. There shall be at least ten meetings each year that are open to all members and to anyone else unless a meeting of INNOCENT decides otherwise.
- b. A meeting shall take place on a date and at a place decided at the meeting preceding it, unless circumstances prevent a meeting from taking place, in which case the chairperson shall decide on the date of the next meeting and send a notification of the time and place of the meeting to all members.
- c. A meeting shall consist of at least six members.
- d. Meetings shall be chaired by the Chairperson. If the Chairperson is not present at a meeting, the meeting shall elect a member who is present to chair the meeting.
- e. Voting at all meetings of INNOCENT, including meetings of the Management Committee if it has been elected, shall be by a show of hands of members present. If there is a tied vote then the Chairperson shall have a second vote.
- f. Any information shared at meetings will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. No information concerning individuals or their cases will be shared without the express permission of the individual concerned or of that individual's supporters if the individual has authorised them to do so. The unauthorised sharing of such information by a member shall be sufficient reason for the termination of that member's membership.

6) Officers

- a. The officers of INNOCENT shall be the Chairperson and the Secretary.
- b. The officers shall be elected at a meeting of INNOCENT.

7) The Duties of the Officers.

- a. The duties of the Chairperson shall be to:
 - o chair meetings of INNOCENT and the Management Committee
 - o represent INNOCENT at functions/meetings that INNOCENT has been

invited to and

- o act as the spokesperson of INNOCENT when necessary.

b. The duties of the Secretary shall be to:

- o keep a membership list
- o prepare in consultation with the Chairperson the agenda for meetings of the Management Committee (if elected)
- o take and keep minutes of all meetings of the Management Committee (if elected) and record all decisions of general meetings and anything else that a meeting decides should be recorded
- o collect and circulate any relevant information within the Management Committee (if elected)
- o supervise the financial affairs of INNOCENT and
- o keep proper accounts which show all monies received and paid out by INNOCENT.

8) Management

- a. Any meeting of INNOCENT may elect a Management Committee to which any of its powers may be delegated. The Committee shall administer INNOCENT until an Annual General Meeting takes place.
- b. The Management Committee shall consist of not less than four and not more than ten individuals elected at the Annual General Meeting, and shall include the Chairperson, the Secretary and the Treasurer..
- c. The Management Committee may co-opt onto itself up to three individuals, in an advisory and non-voting capacity, who it feels will help to fulfil the aim of INNOCENT.
- d. The Management Committee shall meet at least four times a year.
- e. At least three Management Committee members must be present for a Management Committee meeting to take place.
- f. The Management Committee shall have the power to remove any member of the Committee for good and proper reason.
- g. The Management Committee may appoint any other member of the Committee as a Management Committee member to fill a vacancy, provided that the maximum prescribed is not exceeded.

9) Finance.

- a. All monies received by or on behalf of INNOCENT shall be applied to further the aims of INNOCENT and for no other purpose.
- b. Any bank accounts opened for INNOCENT shall be in the name of INNOCENT.
- c. Any cheques issued shall be signed by the Treasurer or the Chairperson.
- d. INNOCENT shall ensure that its accounts are audited or independently examined every year.

- e. INNOCENT may pay reasonable out of pocket expenses including travel, childcare and meal costs to members engaged on business agreed at a meeting of INNOCENT.

10) Annual General Meeting.

- a. The first meeting of INNOCENT in each calendar year shall be an Annual General Meeting (A.G.M.).
- b. All members shall be given at least fourteen days notice of the A.G.M. and shall be entitled to attend and vote.
- c. The business of the A.G.M. shall include:
 - o receiving a report from the Chairperson on INNOCENT's activities over the year,
 - o receiving a report from the Treasurer on the finances of INNOCENT,
 - o electing a Management Committee, and
 - o considering any other matter as may be decided.

11) Alterations to the Constitution.

- a. Any changes to this Constitution must be agreed by at least two thirds of those members present and voting at any meeting.
- b. Proposals for changes to this Constitution cannot agreed at a meeting unless the proposals have been sent to all members at least twenty-one days before the meeting at which they are to be determined.

12) Dissolution.

- a. INNOCENT may be wound up at any time if agreed by two-thirds of those members present and voting at any meeting.
- b. A proposal for winding up INNOCENT cannot agreed at a meeting unless the proposal has been sent to all members at least twenty-one days before the meeting at which it is to be determined.
- c. In the event of winding up any assets remaining after all debts have been paid shall be given to another organization or charity with a similar aim.

13) Adoption of the Constitution.

This Constitution was adopted on the seventh of July 2010.