

COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN - BUNREACTH

Comhaltas, which was founded in 1951, has today over 400 branches of the movement at home and abroad. Through Comhaltas, the traditional musicians, singers and dancers are organised and presented in the various events promoted by the movement.

Each year over forty Fleadhanna Cheoil, competitive festivals of traditional music, are organised by Comhaltas; it also organises other competitive events and festivals of an exhibition nature.

Educational facilities have a high priority in the movement's programme, and it is through its numerous classes and courses that exponents of the native arts are given the opportunity of developing their artistic abilities in this sphere of our native culture.

The evolution of a full and representative archive of native music and song has reached an advanced stage and this will continue to form a major part of Comhaltas policy.

Comhaltas concerns itself with the development of an environment conducive to the Aims and Objects of the movement; this is reflected in its work in the field of radio, television, films and other areas of the communications media.

Through publications, records, sessions, concerts, céilithe and other educational-recreational projects, the movement continues to mould our music, song and dance as integral and potent components of community life.

Irish, the native language of Ireland, is afforded a special status in Comhaltas and the movement is unreservedly committed to its promotion.

THE BRANCH

The Branch is the fundamental and most important unit of the Comhaltas movement. It is the Branch which makes it possible for our native cultural characteristics to be propagated and strengthened in the community. The formation of a branch is a relatively simple task along the following lines and in accordance with the Bunreacth:

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(a) Notify the County or Regional Board of your intention and obtain permission for same,

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(b) Call a meeting of all those interested in the movement and invite the County or Regional Board to send a representative;

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(c) Elect the required officers, collect the membership fees; and make the required returns, including public liability insurance premium, to the County or Regional Board;

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(d) The County or Regional Board will assist the Branch in planning a programme of activities, and will generally instruct the branch on matters relating to Comhaltas;

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(e) After formation, the Branch will fully involve itself in County or Regional Board affairs.

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COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN - BUNREACHT SECTION 1: GENERAL

NOTE 1 All references to County Boards and Officers, also refer to Regional Boards and Officers in the cases of Britain and North America.

NOTE 2 In the case of North America, separate arrangements re date deadlines may apply, with the consent of the Ardchomhairle.

TITLE

1 The official title of the Movement shall be Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, hereinafter referred to as 'An Comhaltas'.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2 (a) To promote Irish Traditional Music in all its forms; (b) To restore the playing of the Harp and Uilleann Pipes in the National life of Ireland; (c) To promote Irish Traditional Dancing; (d) To foster and promote the Irish language at all times; (e) To create a closer bond among all lovers of Irish music; (f) To co-operate with all bodies working for the restoration or Irish Culture; (g) To establish Branches throughout the country and abroad to achieve the foregoing aims and objects.

MEMBERSHIP

3 An Comhaltas shall be non-political and non-denominational. Membership shall be open to all who are in sympathy with the Aims and Objects of An Comhaltas, and who undertake to abide by its Constitution and Rules. Junior members, who are under 15 years on January 1st of the current year, shall not be eligible for election to any office in An Comhaltas, nor have the right to vote. Junior members aged fifteen years and over on January 1st shall have full voting rights, and shall be eligible for election to office in any unit of An Comhaltas.

PATRONS

4 The Organisation shall have authority to invite a person or persons, clerical or lay, who need not necessarily be members to become patrons during his/her lifetime. The CEC shall select a Patron on the grounds that he/she has shown sympathy with the

work of the Organisation, or interest in its activities or regard for its Aims and outlook. He/she may take part in all the activities of An Comhaltas; but he/she shall not have the right to vote at any meeting of the Organisation.

EACH BRANCH SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT

5 (a) To grant or refuse membership to any person seeking it;

(b) To expel any of its members for conduct which is deemed to be contrary to the Aims and Objects of An Comhaltas and likely to bring An Comhaltas into disrepute, provided always that an opportunity be afforded to the member(s) in question to answer the allegations and that member(s) be duly notified in writing of the findings of such investigation. The aggrieved member(s) shall have a right to appeal in the first instance to the County Board and subsequently to the Provincial Council. The decision of the Provincial Council shall be final unless it decides to submit the matter to the Central Executive Council. Where no County Board is in operation the appeal in the first instance shall be direct to the Provincial Council.

ORGANISATION

6 An Comhaltas shall be constituted as follows:

- * (a) Branches;
- * (b) County Boards (Regional Boards in Britain and North America);
- * (c) Provincial Councils;
- * (d) Central Executive Council;

hereinafter referred to as Units of An Comhaltas.

Annual Congress shall be the Supreme Governing Body.

7 One copy of the Constitution and Rules in Irish and English shall be issued to each unit on formation of such unit. Members and units may purchase further copies if so desired.

8 All disputes involving the interpretation of any of the provisions of this Constitution shall be resolved by reference to the Irish version only.

9 New and amended provisions adopted at the Annual Congress shall come into force on the first day of November immediately following such Annual Congress.

FINANCE

10 Treasurers of Units of An Comhaltas shall be responsible for the collection and disbursement of their Unit's funds. They shall lodge to the account of An Comhaltas, in a bank approved by their Unit, Membership Fees; the proceeds of functions held by their Unit; money and other gifts received by the Unit on behalf of An Comhaltas. Details of all accounts held by the Branch, together with Account No. or Nos. must be shown on the Affiliation Forms in the space provided. All cheques and drafts on the bankers shall be signed by the Treasurer and either the Chairman or Secretary of the depositing Unit.

11 Chattels, such as perpetual trophies, musical instruments, tape recorders, securities, banners etc., acquired by the various Units shall be valued and shown as assets in their Annual Financial Statements. The insurance and safe custody of these chattels shall be the responsibility of the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of the Unit owning such property.

12 A Financial Statement shall show:

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(a) Total income and its source for the period covered;

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(b) Total expenditure for the same period, and manner in which spent;

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(c) Balance showing nett profit or loss in cash for the period covered.

The Financial Statement shall also show a Balance Sheet showing:

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(a) Total assets at commencement of period covered;

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(b) Having deducted the loss or added the profit at (c) above, the total assets at the end of the period covered.

13 Treasurers of Units of An Comhaltas shall draw up and submit to their Annual General Meeting an audited Statement of Accounts accurately vouched, showing all assets, receipts and expenditure and certified by Auditors appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

14 The Financial Year shall end for Branches on 31st October; for County Boards on 30th November; for Provincial Councils on 31st December; for the Central Executive Council on 31st December. In the Province of North America the Financial Year for Branches shall end on September 30th; for Regional Boards on October 31st and for Provincial Council on December 31st.

15 All monies, fees, etc., shall come from Branch to County to Province to Head Office.

16 The funds of all units of An Comhaltas shall be devoted solely to the promotion of Irish traditional music and culture in accordance with the Aims and Objects of An Comhaltas as enshrined in this Constitution. A unit may supplement its funds from the proceeds of social functions, gifts, subscriptions, or other means approved by its superior unit.

17 Officers, Delegates or Adjudicators shall not be paid a fee for their services to An Comhaltas. Necessary travelling expenses, at the rate of standard class rail fare, bus

fare or petrol allowance as amended from time to time by the Central Executive Council, shall be paid in all cases together with a reasonable subsistence allowance.

GENERAL

18 All functions held under the auspices of An Comhaltas shall be in keeping with the ideals of An Comhaltas and the Clár for such functions shall be submitted for prior approval to the immediate superior governing body.

19 None but a member of An Comhaltas shall be co-opted into any position in the Organisation. Committees or sub-Committees for special purposes may include non-members by special permission of the immediate superior governing body. Only registered members of Comhaltas are eligible for office in any unit of Comhaltas, including the position of Trustee.

20 Membership cards shall be provided annually by the CEC and issued by the National Registrar, through County Boards. Each Branch Secretary should have a supply of membership cards to issue on payment of membership fees. No membership fees may be accepted at Branch level within two months of the end of the financial year.

VOTING AND ELECTIONS

21 Only fully paid up members will be entitled to vote throughout the Organisation and admission to election meetings shall be by membership card only.

22 (a) All officers shall hold office from the conclusion of the Annual Meeting at which they are elected to the conclusion of the succeeding Annual Meeting, and all shall be eligible for re-election, except as otherwise provided for in this Bunreacht.

(b) The position of any officer in any unit of An Comhaltas shall become vacant

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(i) on the death of the officer;

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(ii) if by notice in writing to the unit concerned, he/she resigns from office;

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(iii) if he/she is deemed to have failed to carry out his/her duties of office through neglect;

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(iv) if he/she fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the unit without just cause for his/her absence.

(c) In the event of the office of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, PRO, Auditor or Treasurer of a Branch, a County Board, or a Provincial Council becoming vacant for any reason, other than sickness more than three months before the expiry of the term for which that officer was elected, a special meeting shall be called inside 28 days for the purpose of electing a member of the particular unit to the vacant position.

23 A person may not be elected in his/her absence to any office in An Comhaltas unless he/she has forwarded to the appropriate Secretary a signed statement as to his/her willingness to accept if elected or unless that willingness may be legitimately presumed. The Secretary of the unit to which a person is nominated as officer shall notify such person of such nomination.

24 Candidates for office shall not be eligible for re- election unless they have attended at least 50% of the meetings which they are required to attend, and not less than three such meetings in the case of new members.

25 Voting at an election for any office in An Comhaltas shall take place by secret ballot only. Should a nominee for office fail to receive an absolute majority on the first count, the lowest placed candidate shall be eliminated, and a further count taken, and the process continued until one candidate receives an absolute majority.

SECTION 2 - BRANCHES

1 A Branch of An Comhaltas may be established anywhere, provided that:

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(a) Not less than five persons inform the County Board, or Provincial Council where no County Board exists, of their intention to establish a Branch, to support the Aims and Objects of An Comhaltas and abide by its Rules and Constitution;

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(b) The necessary sanction for the establishment of a Branch has been obtained from the County Board or the Provincial Council as the case may be;

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(c) The prescribed fees have been paid to the Treasurer of the County Board or the Provincial Council as the case may be.

2 Where no appropriate structure exists abroad, applicants for the establishment of a Branch shall be made direct to the Central Executive Council, with the exception of Britain and North America, where applications shall be made to the Regional Boards.

3 As soon as possible after receipt of approval, the members shall elect from among their own number the following officers: (a) Chairman; (b) Vice-Chairman; (c) Secretary/Registrar; (d) Treasurer; (e) Auditor - who shall hold no other office in that particular unit; (f) PRO; (g) Treoraí na Gaeilge; (h) two delegates to the County Board or one delegate to the Provincial Council where no County Board exists.

4 The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary/Registrar, Treasurer and PRO shall, under the direction of the Branch, constitute the Branch Committee to deal with all routine matters arising between full Branch Meetings. The Branch may augment this Committee if desirable.

POWERS AND DUTIES

5 The principal task of a Branch shall be:

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(a) The enrolment of traditional musicians (both vocal and instrumental), traditional dancers and supporters of the aims and objects of An Comhaltas;

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(b) Setting up facilities for teaching Irish traditional music, singing, dancing, and language to our members.

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(c) Spreading information about An Comhaltas and its activities;

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(d) Performing any other tasks reasonably assigned to it by the County Board, Provincial Council, or Central Executive Council.

6 The Branch shall keep a list of all affiliated members - a copy of which shall be presented to the Annual General Meeting. Copies of this list, together with the names of the Officers of the Branch, shall be forwarded to the County Board in triplicate for transmission to Province and Head Office, on the formation and after each Annual General Meeting of the Branch.

7 The Branch Secretary shall keep the Secretary of the County Board or Provincial Council, if appropriate, fully informed of all functions to be held by the Branch, and submit the Clár for prior approval.

8 (a) Each Branch shall, on initial registration, be entitled to one free copy of An Bunreacht and shall be bound by the rules contained therein.

* (b) Each Branch shall have the right to submit motions to the Annual Congress.

9 The Branch shall meet quarterly - all members to be notified. The Branch Committee shall meet as often as necessary.

10 An Annual General Meeting must be held before 30 November each year, all members of the Branch to be duly notified. The principal functions of the Annual General Meeting shall be the election of Officers for the coming year and consideration of Branch Financial Statement.

11 A Branch shall be empowered to make its own rules regulating the conduct of meetings, etc., provided that they do not conflict with anything contained in, or implied by, this Constitution and Rules.

FINANCE

12 The Branch shall be responsible for the collection of the annual membership fee. The amount of this fee shall be as determined by Congress annually. This fee is due on the formation of a branch and on the 1st of November annually thereafter. The Branch shall remit such portion of this fee as is established by Annual Congress to the County Board or to the Province where no County Board exists. The Branch shall

collect a sum as determined by Congress annually from each member under eighteen years of age, such members to be known as 'Junior Members'. These fees shall be apportioned as Annual Congress decides. Junior members shall be considered for branch strength.

13 The financial affairs of each Branch shall be conducted in the manner described in rules 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 of Section 1 of this Constitution and Rules. The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer shall be responsible to the Trustees of An Comhaltas in these matters.

14 Copies of the adopted Financial Statement shall be forwarded to (a) the Secretary of the County Board (b) the Secretary of the Provincial Council (where applicable) not later than 15th December.

15 A Branch shall pay out of its funds the authorised expenses of its officers and delegates.

16 By virtue of Rule 2 Section 6 of this Constitution all property in the possession or control of a Branch is vested in the Trustees of An Comhaltas and the authority of the Branch to deal with such property is subject to the approval of the Trustees and such approval may be withdrawn by the Trustees at any time. The Branch and each member of the Branch having possession or control of such property shall be responsible for the safe delivery of such property to the Trustees if such delivery is required by the Trustees.

17 A registered member of a branch may not transfer to another branch within the membership year, without the prior approval of the County Board of the County (or Provincial Council if no County Board exists) in which he/she is a member.

SECTION 3 - COUNTY BOARDS

1 A County Board shall be formed in every county where three or more Branches exist. Such County Board shall be under the control and direction of the Provincial Council, which may terminate such County Board and take over its assets if the number of Branches fall below three.

2 A County Board shall consist of the following Officers elected annually: (a) Chairman; (b) Vice-Chairman; (c) Secretary/Registrar; (d) Treasurer; (e) PRO; (f) Treoraí na Gaeilge; (g) Two Auditors, who shall hold no other office in that particular unit; (h) Two Delegates to Provincial Council; (i) Two Delegates from each Branch in the County

County Boards shall have the right to create other offices, without voting rights.

3 The Officers of the County Board, Chairman, Vice- Chairman, Secretary/Registrar, Treasurer and PRO as described above, shall under the direction of the County Board constitute the County Committee for the purpose of dealing with all matters of urgency arising between meetings of the full County Board.

POWERS AND DUTIES

4 (a) The County Board shall, subject to the supervision of the Provincial Council, control the workings of its constituent Branches and its chief tasks shall be the formation of new Branches and the propagation of the aims and objects of An Comhaltas. It shall have power to raise funds and to disburse funds only in furtherance of the Aims and Objects of An Comhaltas.

(b) It shall have the right to submit motions to Annual Congress.

(c) The County Board shall have the right to suspend any branch, and/or remove from office, a branch officer or officers, where it has been clearly established that the branch or officers of the branch are guilty of conduct which is deemed to be contrary to the ideals and objects of An Comhaltas, as enshrined in this Constitution, and is calculated to bring An Comhaltas into disrepute. Where a branch is suspended, the County Board shall for the time being be empowered to exercise all the functions of the said branch. A branch or officer so suspended shall have the right of appeal to the Provincial Council.

5 The County Board shall retain one copy of the Branch Membership Report Forms and shall forward in duplicate to the province:

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(a) County Board Report Forms;

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(b) Branch Membership Report Forms;

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(c) All proposed functions under the auspices of An Comhaltas within the County. The Secretary shall give seven days notice of meetings, attend such meetings and compile the minutes.

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(d) He/she shall also forward to the Provincial Secretary before January 27th, the names of officers nominated for the Provincial Council.

6 Each County Board shall meet at least once quarterly on a date and at a venue to be decided at the previous meeting. In a County with less than ten branches, five members - two at least of whom must be officers, shall constitute a quorum. In a County with ten or more branches the quorum shall be one fifth of the representatives entitled to attend, two at least of those must be officers.

7 The Annual Meeting, all members being duly notified, shall be held not later than January 20. The principal functions of this meeting shall be the election of officers and the consideration of Financial Statements of the County Board, Branches and the County Fleadh Committee. Nomination of officers of the County Board shall be made in writing by the Branches to the County Secretary not later than the 15th December.

8 The financial affairs of the County Board shall be conducted in accordance with rules 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 of Section 1 of this Constitution and the

Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of the County Board shall be responsible to the Trustees of An Comhaltas in all matters arising from such financial affairs.

9 The County Board shall collect from each Branch an amount, as determined by Congress annually, in respect of each member, and shall forward to the province such portion of membership fees as has also been determined by Congress.

10 Copies of the annual financial statement audited by the honorary auditors shall, on adoption by the annual meeting, be forwarded by the Secretary to the Provincial Treasurer before 31st January.

11 Such perpetual trophies as are acquired by a County Board shall be the property of the County Board and shall be shown as assets and manner described in Rules 11 and 12 Section 1. These trophies shall be insured by the County Board Treasurer and made available to each succeeding Fleadh Committee. The Treasurer of the County Board shall keep a list of the names and addresses of the prizewinners who were awarded these perpetual trophies.

12 There shall be only one Annual County Fleadh held in any county, the nett profit of which shall be divided as follows: (a) 50 percent to branch running the Fleadh (b) 50 percent to the County Board.

Losses shall be borne in the same proportions. The County Board may, at its discretion, organise Regional Fleadhanna, from which the qualifiers for the County Fleadh Cheoil shall be selected.

13 In the event of a County Board failing to furnish a proper Annual Financial Statement, the Provincial Council shall appoint from its members an Auditor to examine the accounts of such county board and having heard his/her report may impose a suitable penalty.

SECTION 4 - PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

1 Provincial Councils shall consist of (a) Chairman; (b) Vice-Chairman; (c) Treasurer; (d) Secretary/Registrar; (e) Two Honorary Auditors, who shall hold no other office in that particular unit; (f) PRO; (g) Treoraí na Gaeilge; (h) Two delegates from each County Board (one may attend from each Branch in a county where no County Board exists). Provincial Councils shall have the right to create further non-voting offices.

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

2 Provincial Councils shall control and direct all activities of An Comhaltas within the province with the exception of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, which shall continue under the direction of the Central Executive Council, with the co-operation of the Provincial Council. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary/Registrar, Treasurer and PRO of the Provincial Council shall be automatically members of all Fleadh Committees within the Province, be they County, Provincial or Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

3 It shall have, in conjunction with the County Board or Branch where no County Board exists, the right to advise how the County Board or Branch fund should be applied to furthering the Aims and Objects of An Comhaltas within the county concerned.

4 (a) It shall have the right to decide all disputes arising within its province involving members, Branches or County Boards.

(b) Provincial Councils shall have the power to submit motions to Annual Congress.

5 The Provincial Council shall have the right to suspend any County Board or Branch where no County Board exists, within the Province. Such right shall be exercised only when it has been clearly established that the County Board or Branch concerned has been guilty of conduct which is deemed to be contrary to the ideals and objects of An Comhaltas, as enshrined in this Constitution, and is calculated to bring An Comhaltas into disrepute. Where a County Board or Branch is suspended, the Provincial Council shall for the time being be empowered to exercise all the functions of the said County Board or Branch. An appeal from any decision of the Provincial Council shall be to the Central Executive Council, whose decision shall be final.

6 Provincial Councils shall meet at least once quarterly on a fixed date, and at a venue to be selected at the previous meeting. The Secretary shall give seven days notice of the meeting, and a copy of the Agenda to all delegates. Dates for all fleadhanna and other competitions shall be allocated on or before the 31st October.

The Provincial Council of North America shall meet at least twice per annum. The date and venue for all such meetings shall be selected at the previous meeting.

7 A special meeting of the Provincial Council may be convened by the Secretary in consultation with the Chairman or at the request of three County Boards.

8 The financial affairs of the Provincial Council shall be conducted in accordance with Rules 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 of Section 1 of this Constitution. The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of the Provincial Council shall be responsible to the Trustees of An Comhaltas in all matters arising from such financial affairs.

9 The Provincial Council may pay out of its funds the authorised official travelling and subsistence expenses of its officers and of other persons acting under its control.

10 The nett profits of the Annual Provincial Fleadh shall be divided in the following manner: (a) To the Branch running the fleadh 25 pc (b) To the County Board 25 pc (c) To the Provincial Council 25 pc (d) To the Central Council 25 pc Losses shall be borne in the same proportions.

11 The Province shall collect from the County Board or Branch where applicable, the appropriate membership fees, and forward such portion of same as has been determined by Congress annually to Head Office.

12 Provincial Councils shall present to Provincial Convention

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(a) The Secretary's report;

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(b) Financial Statement audited by the honorary auditors, together with a list of all duly affiliated County Boards, and all duly affiliated Branches in the Province. This list should show also the total membership in the Province for each financial year.

13 A Provincial Council failing to furnish an audited statement of accounts, accurately vouched, shall, after an investigation by the Central Council, be liable to whatever disciplinary action the Central Executive Council may take. This may involve the suspension of any or all of the officers concerned.

The Central Executive Council may take control of the work of An Comhaltas within the province until the financial statement is prepared and accepted.

14 Perpetual Trophies acquired by the Provincial Fleadh Committee shall be the property of the Provincial Council for use in succeeding Fleadhanna and shall be shown as assets in the manner described in Rule 11 Section 1. The Treasurer of the Provincial Council shall keep a register which will show the location of such Trophies and chattels and arrange that they are available in time for each succeeding Fleadh. He/she shall forward to the Competitions Secretary a list of Trophies. The Treasurer of the Provincial Council shall insure these perpetual Trophies against theft, loss or damage.

PROVINCIAL CONVENTIONS

15 Apart from the Province of Nth. America, Provincial Conventions shall be held annually on or before the last day of February. Four weeks previous to the date of the meeting, County Secretaries and Branch Secretaries where no County Board exists, shall receive copies of the Financial Statement, Agenda and list of nominees. Candidates for positions shall be nominated by County Boards, and notified to the Provincial Secretary not later than five weeks prior to Convention.

The Provincial Convention of North America shall be held annually not later than the last Sunday in April, at a Branch venue selected at least twelve months previously.

16 The Convention shall consist of: (a) Officers of the outgoing Provincial Council; (b) The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of each County Board (who shall not be represented by substitutes), and two representatives from each County Board; (c) Two representatives from each Branch affiliated for the current financial year.

FUNCTIONS OF THE PROVINCIAL CONVENTION

17 The functions of the Provincial Convention shall be:

(a) To consider Financial Statements of County Boards; (b) To consider Financial Statements of Branches where no County Board exists; (c) To consider Financial Statements of Provincial Fleadh. These Financial Statements properly audited must be submitted to the Provincial Secretary annually not later than December 17th. (d) To consider Financial Statement of the Provincial Council; (e) To consider report of the Provincial Secretary (f) To elect the following officers: Chairman; Vice- Chairman; Secretary/Registrar; Treasurer; PRO; Treoraí na Gaeilge; two Honorary Auditors who shall hold no other office and two delegates to CEC. The Chairman of the Provincial

Council shall be a Vice-Chairman of the Central Executive Council. All votes must be cast personally.

18 The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary/Registrar, Treasurer and PRO described at 17(f) above shall, under the direction of the Provincial Council, constitute a Provincial Standing Committee to deal with matters of urgency arising between meetings the Provincial Council.

19 Provincial Chairmen shall be 'ex-officio' members their respective Councils during the year which follows the termination of their office.

20 Provincial Convention shall nominate candidates to be elected at Congress for position of (a) President-General; (b) Treasurer-General; (c) Secretary-General; (d) Registrar-General.

Ulster Provincial Convention shall appoint a Liaison Officer between An Comhaltas and the "Antrim and Derry Fiddlers' Association", such appointment to ratified by Congress.

SECTION 5 - CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (CEC)

The Central Executive Council shall consist of:

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(a) President-General: Candidates for this position shall signify in writing their intention to all Provincial Secretaries not later than 17th January of the year in which the election is to take place. On the nomination of at least one Provincial Convention a candidate shall be elected by a majority of those present and entitled to vote at Congress, at the first business on Sunday afternoon. The President-General shall hold office for a period of three years, and shall not be eligible for re-election until a further three years have elapsed. Should the position of President-General become vacant during the three years period of tenancy, it shall be filled from among the six Vice-Chairmen, by a majority vote of the CEC. The President-General so elected shall have the right to be a candidate for the following tenancy of three years. Duties: The President-General shall preside at meetings of the CEC, Standing Committee and Annual Congress. He/she shall act as President at the opening ceremony of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, and other functions of a National character under the auspices of the CEC. In consultation with the Secretary-General and Director-General, he/she shall arrange meeting and Agenda of the CEC and Standing Committee.

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(b) Secretary-General: A candidate for this position, having signified his/her intention as in the case of the President-General, and been nominated by one Provincial Convention shall be elected by a majority of those present and entitled to vote at Congress during the first business on Sunday afternoon. He/she shall act as Secretary to the CEC, Standing Committee and Annual Congress. In consultation with the President-General and Director-General, he/she shall arrange Agenda for meetings of the CEC. and Standing Committee, and shall perform the additional duties assigned to him/her by the CEC.

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(c) Six Vice-Chairmen: appointed as laid down in Section 4 Rule 17(f).

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(d) Treasurer-General: The Treasurer-General shall be elected annually in accordance with the procedure applicable to the position of the Secretary-General. He/she shall act in accordance with Rules 12 to 14 of Section 5 of An Bunreacht. Three weeks prior to Congress he/she shall supply audited accounts to Head Office.

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(e) Registrar-General: The Registrar-General shall be elected annually in accordance with the procedure applicable to the position of the Secretary-General. He/she shall be responsible for the issue of membership cards; insurance of Fleadh Cheoil na Éireann trophies; he/she shall be responsible for the recording of Comhaltas assets at all levels; he/she shall ensure the eligibility of Congress delegates.

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(f) Competitions Officer: A Competitions Officer shall be appointed by CEC from among its own members. Duties: He/she shall co-operate with Head Office in all matters connected with Fleadhanna, Scoraíocht and other competitions.

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(g) Music Officer: A Music Officer shall be appointed by the CEC from amongst its own members. Duties: He/she shall act as Secretary to the Coiste Ceoil and shall direct its work in co-operation with CEC and under its direction.

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(h) Public Relations Officer: A Public Relations Officer shall be appointed by the CEC from amongst its own members. Duties: He/she shall co-operate with Head Office in matters relating to publicity and Public Relations.

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(i) Two delegates from each Provincial Council.

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(j) Two non-voting observers from the following: National Sub-Committees: Coiste Ceoil and Coiste Rince.

The CEC shall have power to co-opt, if necessary, members to fill the positions (f), (g) and (h).

2 The President-General, Director-General, Treasurer- General, Secretary-General and Registrar-General shall, under the direction of the CEC, constitute the Standing Committee for the purpose of dealing with the day to day work of the Central Executive Council, or for the purpose of carrying out duties assigned to it by the Central Council.

3 The CEC shall have power to fill, from amongst its members, any casual vacancy amongst its officers, and where a vacancy occurs in the Council, a new representative shall be appointed forthwith by the Provincial Council of the vacating members. The

proceedings of the CEC shall not be invalid by reason of any vacancy in its membership or any default in the election of any member thereof.

PROCEDURE

4 The CEC shall meet at least three times per annum at such time and place as is proposed and agreed at the previous meeting. It may be summoned for extraordinary meetings where the Standing Committee deems it necessary or expedient. The Director-General shall give seven days notice of the meeting to all members together with a copy of the Agenda.

5 The quorum for a CEC meeting shall be one-fifth of its members including at least two Executive Officers. The Chairman must be an Executive Officer.

6 (a) The CEC shall be the supreme governing body of An Comhaltas from Annual Congress to Annual Congress and the sole and final authority to interpret the Rules and Constitution. Its jurisdiction shall extend over the whole Organisation in all matters of discipline as well as those that pertain to funds, investments and property of An Comhaltas. It shall carry out the proper exercise of this jurisdiction through its Trustees.

(b) CEC shall have the right to submit motions to Annual Congress.

7 It shall have power to decide appeals as provided for in this Constitution.

8 If in the judgement of the CEC any Unit of the Organisation fails to observe the Rules of An Comhaltas as expressed in this Constitution or is guilty of action injurious to the good name of An Comhaltas, the CEC may, after consultation with the said Units immediate Superior Body, dissolve such a Unit and take over its assets.

9 (a) The CEC shall have power to raise funds, to place such levies on County Boards or Branches as shall be consistent with the well being of the Organisation as a whole. It shall have power to make grants or loans available to Units of the Organisation for the promotion of the aims and objects of An Comhaltas.

(b) The CEC shall have power to borrow money to advance the aims, objects and properly authorised projects of Comhaltas. The CEC may at its discretion, authorise Branches, Co. Boards or Provincial Councils to borrow money for approved projects, and no unit of Comhaltas shall borrow money by way of loan or overdraft without prior written authority of the CEC.

10 The CEC may from time to time appoint Committees either of a General or Special character for any purpose which, in its opinion, would be better managed by such committees, but the acts of any such committees shall be submitted to the CEC for approval.

11 It shall have power to allocate the venue of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in accordance with this Constitution.

12 Paid Officials: The duties, responsibilities and conditions of employment of full-time paid officials shall be determined by the CEC and shall be governed by Legal Agreements.

FINANCE

13 The financial affairs of the CEC shall be conducted in the manner described in rules 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17 Section 1 of this Constitution and Rules. The President-General, Secretary-General and Treasurer- General shall be responsible in all these matters to the Trustees of An Comhaltas.

14 The Treasurer-General shall present to the Annual Congress the Auditor's Report and detailed Balance Sheet audited by An Comhaltas Auditor as appointed at the previous National Congress, It shall show all receipts, expenditures, investments and assets, together with the financial position of An Comhaltas at the end of the year under review.

15 The disbursement of Government and other grants at national level shall be the sole responsibility of CEC.

16 The CEC may pay out of its funds the authorised expenses necessary to carry out its duties

17 (a) (i) All property of Comhaltas is occupied by it for the transaction of its business and for the carrying into effect of its purpose;

(ii) The income and property of Comhaltas may be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Organisation as set forth in this constitution;

(iii) No portion of the income or property of Comhaltas may be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise by way of profit to its members.

(b) In the event of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann ceasing to operate and subject to existing agreements with public bodies/agencies, all assets of the movement will be transferred - in consultation with appropriate public bodies and agencies - to a non-political and non-sectarian cultural Organisation holding similar aims and objects to that of CCE, and which also prohibits the distribution of income and property to its members.

(c) Comhaltas shall be supported by annual voluntary contributions.

GENERAL

18 The President-General in all cases has a casting vote in the event of a tie.

19 The President-General shall be an ex-officio member of the CEC for one year after completion of his/her term of office.

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SECTION 6 - TRUSTEES

1 (a) There shall be at least one and not more than three trustees of An Comhaltas and such Trustees shall be appointed at the first Meeting of the Central Executive Council following the adoption of these rules, by a resolution of the majority of the members present and entitled to vote at that meeting. Such Trustees-General when appointed shall hold office permanently subject to the rules hereinafter set forth governing retirement, removal from office and appointment of new Trustees-General.

(b) Any Trustee-General may retire from office by giving, to the other Trustees-General and the Secretary-General Of the CEC, seven days notice in writing.

(c) Any General Meeting of the CEC may remove a Trustee-General from office, provided that there Must be a majority of two-thirds of the delegates present at such meeting in favour of such removal upon a secret ballot being taken, and provided that twenty-one days prior to such meeting the Secretary-General of the CEC shall have given to the Trustees concerned notice of the motion for his/her removal from office.

(d) When a vacancy arises due to the death of a Trustee-General or his/her retirement or removal from office in accordance with the foregoing paragraph the Standing Committee shall have the power to appoint a person to act as Trustee-General until the next General Meeting of the CEC and such General Meeting shall appoint a Trustee-General.

2 All property of An Comhaltas both real and personal of whatever nature and wheresoever situated shall be vested in the Trustees-General by virtue of their appointment in accordance with the foregoing rule and they shall in all respects deal with and administer all such property in accordance with the direction or requirements of the Central Executive Council.

3 The Trustees-General shall institute any proceedings either criminal or civic on behalf of the CEC and shall likewise defend any such proceedings. All persons holding any property of An Comhaltas shall be responsible to the Trustees-General for the safe care and custody of such property, and the Trustees-General shall have power to sue any such person for any damage, loss or injury caused to such property

4 The CEC shall indemnify the Trustees-General against personal loss or damage arising from such legal actions.

5 The Trustees-General shall be entitled to attend any meeting of An Comhaltas or any meeting of the Executive of An Comhaltas and the Secretary- General if requested by a majority of the Trustees-General, shall call a General Meeting. The Trustees- General, if required by the Secretary-General by notice in writing delivered to each of the Trustees- General not less than twenty-one days before an Annual General Meeting, shall furnish to such Annual General Meeting a report of all or any matters relating to their Trusteeship.

SECTION 7 - ANNUAL CONGRESS

1 The Annual Congress shall be the supreme authority of An Comhaltas and shall consist of:

*

(a) Members of the CEC, the President-General and Secretary-General all of whom shall act in their respective capacities at the Congress;

*

(b) Two Delegates from each affiliated Branch and County Boards. Only Branches and County Boards which were affiliated at least 28 days before Congress shall be entitled to vote.

*

(c) The Secretary and Treasurer of each Provincial Council.

Admission to Annual Congress shall be by special ticket bearing the signature of the Secretary-General and two such tickets shall be supplied to each Branch and County Board.

PROCEDURE

2 Congress shall be held, at a venue chosen at the Previous Congress, on the first Sunday of May and the previous day if necessary. No Comhaltas function shall be held during that weekend.

3 Two weeks before Congress each Unit shall be furnished with (a) Copies of the Agenda; (b) List of Nominees; (c) CEC Report; (d) Minutes.

4 A special Congress may be summoned as follows:

*

(a) By the CEC should the necessity arise;

*

(b) At such time and place as the CEC may decide, but not later than 28 days after receipt by the Secretary of a written request signed by the Chairman of at least 40 branches and accompanied by a deposit of £40 to be disposed of as the special Congress may decide.

5 The Quorum of a Congress shall be one-tenth of those Representatives entitled to attend and five members of CEC.

6 The following shall be the functions and powers of Annual Congress:

*

(a) To elect the following Officers of the CEC: 1 President-General 2 Treasurer-General 3 Secretary-General 4 Registrar-General

*

(b) To appoint a qualified Auditor to audit the accounts of the CEC;

*

(c) To amend, alter or revise the Constitution of An Comhaltas in accordance with Rules 9 and 10 Section 7;

*

(d) To consider reports and Financial Statements of the CEC and Provincial Councils for the preceding financial year. It may delegate all or any of its powers to the Central Executive Council.

*

(e) To determine the amount of membership fee, and the appropriate portion of same which is to be remitted to the various units.

7 Prior to Congress, the Director-General shall notify all units of the latest date for receipt of motions for the Agenda. Before the last day of February, he/she shall forward to Provincial Secretaries nomination papers for the nomination of the CEC. Officers described in Rule 20, Section 4. Motions and nominations must be in Head Office two months prior to Congress. All units of An Comhaltas are entitled to submit motions for Annual Congress.

8 Proposals for the amendment of this Constitution shall be submitted to Head-Office at least two months prior to the Congress at which they are to be discussed.

9 The Constitution can be altered only by a two-third majority of those actually attending and voting at an Annual Congress.

10 Proposals for the amendment of this Constitution shall be put before Congress in 1996 and at six yearly intervals thereafter.

AWARDS FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Officers of An Comhaltas and other members who have given long or outstanding service to the Organisation, may, on the recommendation of the CEC and the approval of Congress be awarded a Distinguished Service Certificate and be made life members of An Comhaltas.