

A Guide to Forming a Gun Club

Meeting Procedures & The Duties of Officers

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Introduction

At the very foundations of our organisation, the National Association of Regional Game Councils (NARGC) we have, mainly unincorporated bodies, usually based at parish level, termed Gun Clubs, Game Clubs, Game Protection Associations, Wildlife Clubs, Clay Pigeon Clubs and bodies otherwise named with a host of other word combinations which broadly depict the ethos of the body itself and the interests of its members which are encapsulated into the ‘corporate title’ applied to that body. Most local bodies are named as ‘Gun Clubs’, but it is proposed to use the term ‘Club’ throughout this publication and the recommendations here apply one and the same regardless of what title is given to the local body.

Since long before the establishment of the NARGC in 1968, Gun Clubs existed in Ireland and were the very stepping stones from which the NARGC took its foundations, they clearly have served us well to this very day and by reason of this, ought to be protected and nourished into the future too. This brief Guide therefore, must be seen in the context of the NARGC wishing to vent its support for the strengthening of these Clubs and their proper functionality as fundamental organs of our Association at local level.

The Club is often a business and must be run on business like lines. Sometimes it is even an employer and so with increasingly complex modern law and compelling legislation with regard to taxation, VAT, health and safety, etc., rules must be drafted, well interpreted and obeyed. Therefore it is fundamentally important that every Club encapsulates all these requirements into what we commonly understand to be a “Constitution”, “Rules” and “Standing Orders” which at the very outset, ought to be adopted by the Club’s membership and which of course can be altered or amended at any time into the future.

The NARGC hopes that this Guide will be a useful reference manual for existing Clubs and an empirical reference tool for Clubs, in formation, in the years to come. Note that any references to the male gender throughout this Guide, shall also include the feminine.

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The Formation of a Club

Throughout Ireland, Clubs are regularly formed for sporting, recreational, social or charitable purposes and it is by this means that civil society comes together under the umbrella of whatever title is used to form a Club. To this end, the formation of a Gun Club expresses a common interest in guns but of course nowadays, a Club is much more than this, hence recently formed Clubs tend to name themselves as Game Conservation Clubs or words akin and indeed some old Gun Clubs are altering their names in recent times too we note. It should be noted there is no statutory definition of a “club” nor are there any laws which govern the rules of a club, its constitution or standing orders or the appointment of its officers. Suffice it to say, a club is a contract between members.

We strongly recommend that every Club has a Constitution, Rules and Standing Orders and that these are adopted by the membership so that every member is aware of his entitlements and obligations. To this end, a typical Club Constitution, Rules and Standing Orders are set out at the end of this Guide (Appendix 1.) and Clubs can modify or tailor this to their individual requirements and adopt it as their ‘operations manual’. Where there is no Constitution, Rules and Standing Orders in place, there is a much greater risk of disputes arising between members and where there is money or other assets involved, which can be substantial at times, this risk greatly intensifies. The Constitution, Rules and Standing Orders for a Club do not need to be complicated or highly convoluted because the very nature of what we do is highly social, sporting and relatively simple and there is simply no need to make a mountain out of a molehill, to use the old adage.

To establish a Club, the following initial steps seem appropriate: -

- a) Advertise the fact that the formation of a Club is intended and if there are known interested parties (hunters), personally inform them and then convene an inaugural meeting at a given time, date and place.
- b) Ideally there should be a minimum of eight members. Establish a Register of Members and at the onset, have each one complete a Membership Application form. Future membership applications should also be set out on a Membership Application Form for

consideration at ordinary meetings of the Club. A sample Membership Application Form is set out in Appendix 2. Note a Club is not legally bound to accept every application nor is it obliged to give reasons for its decisions nor is it liable to an applicant in damages for defamation as a result of a refusal. However, a Club must always comply with the provisions of the Equal Status Act 2000-2004. The process for accepting persons into membership should be simple and should basically be: -

- a. A written application is received by Hon. Secretary.
 - b. The Applicant must have a Proposer and Secunder.
 - c. The application is accepted or rejected at any Club meeting
 - d. The applicant is notified of the outcome
- c) Elect principal Officers – Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Safety Officer. Sometimes a Game Development Officer and a Fund Officer are seen as desirable also. Sometimes too a Club will elect a small number of persons and delegate administrative powers to a Committee which will look after the day to day management affairs of the Club. This is a matter of personal choice. Such a Committee should be kept to a small number of people and careful consideration should be given to the number of officers who are to be appointed, the nature of their powers and duties and the duration of their appointment.
- d) All decisions reached should be recorded in a Minute Book and a Bank Account will have to be set up too, to cater for the Clubs' financial transactions. Never rely on cash transactions. Additionally two (2) signatures should always be required for every cheque drawn.
- e) Prepare a draft Constitution & Rules for the Club and convene another Meeting of all Members to adopt this.
- f) Delineate your Club area on a map and establish a Register of Landowners in your area and seek 'entry permission' from each one. Note this does not have to be written permission as such but if it is, all the better.

- g) Enter into dialogue with your neighbouring Club/s and agree on boundaries, using identifiable corridors, i.e. rivers, roads, railway lines, etc., etc., Do not rely on so-and-so's hedge as this is often open to later deliberate abuse or misinterpretation.
- h) Apply for affiliation to your local County Body (Regional Game Council). Once affiliated, your RGC will supply the paperwork necessary for all your Club members to join the NARGC Compensation Fund which is crucially and fundamentally important and indeed is mandatory throughout the NARGC.

This done, everything proceeds from here, including information on grants for game releases, vermin control and the whole array of advisory services and assistance which is obtainable from the NARGC and its staff.

Persons who 'fall away' from Club membership, resign or fail to pay their annual subscription should always be notified in writing and by registered mail that they are no longer in Club membership or may, within a specified period of time, cease to be members of the Club. A copy of the letter issued should be retained on the files of the Club together with proof of posting. Where a person fails to pay the annual subscription by the specified and agreed date, a letter as set out in Appendix 3 is adequate for sending to him.

On the expiry of the letter, the recipient is no longer a Club member and if he wishes to rejoin, the process of applying for membership must restart completely afresh.

Club Meetings - Location, Ambiance, Etc.

The Club meeting is central to all Club activity and learning to conduct meetings properly is crucial for all Club officers. The general ambiance for meetings is equally important. Some tips are as follows: -

- ~ Meetings should commence not more than 15 minutes later than the appointed starting time.
- ~ The Meeting Room should be compact. Not too big such that there's an echo and not so small that people are crushed.
- ~ If the meeting is not too big, place the chairs in a circle rather than rows so that everyone is in equal view of the Chairman. A circle psychologically encourages participation.
- ~ The temperature in the meeting room is important. If it is too cold, people's attention will wander; too hot and stuffy they'll start to get headachy and touchy or worse still, doze off !
- ~ Avoid having meetings openly in Public Houses. The venue should be free of noise interruptions and of people coming in or going out. In addition, the consumption of alcohol during a Club meeting is entirely inappropriate. Perhaps most important of all, if a Gun Club meeting is being openly held in a Public House, then by and large it can be assumed by all non-involved persons present that most people in attendance at the meeting are firearms owners and therefore a potential target for theft. Persons who attend open Club meetings in a Public House are identifying themselves as likely gun owners and thereby threatening their own security and that of their immediate family. Club meetings in an ante-room are less obvious but the risk of involving alcohol still remains.
- ~ Consideration should also be given to easy access and for the parking of cars.
- ~ A cup of tea or coffee at a meeting and a biscuit is not a hard task to achieve nor is it a financial burden on the Club and is a most welcome treat.

Club Meetings - Productive Outcomes

There are five core steps crucial to a good productive meeting. These are: -

1. Plan

Make sure you are clear about what the Meeting wishes to achieve and that the objectives are clear in your mind.

2. Inform

Inform all members well in advance and be sure that everyone knows what's up for discussion. Everyone should know what is needed to be established by the time the meeting ends. Ensure key people are present and prepared, especially those who have to give reports of assignments, etc.,

3. Prepare

Prepare the sequence of the Meeting in a logical order. The Chairman and Secretary should look back at the Minutes of the last meeting and see what was agreed and what has to be reported on, together with fresh or new issues.

4. Structure

In a Meeting the structure of any topic should be....

- ~ Outline the topic or problem
- ~ Outline the facts or evidence
- ~ Interpret the facts
- ~ Look at other options
- ~ Decide on a solution
- ~ Draw up a plan of action if necessary

5. Control

Do not allow people to jump ahead on the Agenda. Keep discussion moving in an orderly fashion. Summarise progress and decisions at intervals so that everyone is clear and record decisions immediately, noting the name of any person delegated responsibility for a particular action, if that applies.

Club Meetings - Procedure

The following is the typical procedure for a Club meeting: -

- 1. THE CHAIRMAN WELCOMES ALL AND DECLARES THE MEETING OPEN.** Usually apologies for absence or expressions of sympathy are noted at this point and sometimes a 'minutes prayerful silence' is observed for specific reasons or causes.
- 2. THE SECRETARY READS THE MINUTES.** The Minutes are a written record in the Minute Book of decisions taken at the immediate preceding meeting of the Club. The Chairman asks if the Minutes are in order. If they are, a Proposer and Secunder are sought and the Minutes are adopted. If amendments are required, these are noted and the adoption process then takes place. The Chairman then SIGNS AND DATES the Minute Book.
- 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES** are next considered. This could be an update regarding some task for example.
- 4. CORRESPONDENCE** is next considered. The Secretary will read any letters received, discussion will take place on each one as required and necessary actions will be agreed.
- 5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER REPORTS** are next considered. These are presented by the relevant officer or person to whom something has been delegated. Following presentation, the Chairman thanks the Presenter and any ensuing decisions, following discussion, are made and recorded.
- 6. MAIN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA** are next considered. The Chairman introduces each topic and various options are put forward for consideration and discussion. The meeting decides and the decision is recorded by the Secretary, noting any person delegated to implement the decision or carry out any task related to it if necessary.
- 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS** is next which affords members an opportunity to raise issues not specifically on the Agenda. Issues raised may be ruled out of order by the Chairman or deferred to the next meeting for placement on the Agenda.
- 8. THE CHAIRMAN DECLARES THE MEETING CLOSED.**

Club Meetings - General Rules

1. A meeting of a Club cannot take place unless there is a Quorum. A Quorum is a minimum number of members, usually not less than one quarter and which figure is usually stipulated in the Club's Rules, which must be present when a meeting is convened. If a Quorum is not present, then the Chairman should declare the meeting cancelled, the Secretary should record this in the Minute Book and the meeting should be re-convened at another time.
2. There must be a Chairman. In the absence of the elected Chairman, the Vice Chairman should take over and if he is absent, the meeting should elect a member to conduct that particular meeting.
3. Everyone should address the Chair, usually by stating "Mr Chairman" and as a matter of courtesy, there should be no private conversations while a meeting is in progress.
4. Only one person may speak at a time.
5. Each item on the Agenda must be dealt with in sequence and concluded before moving on to the next item.
6. Items on the Agenda, already discussed and agreed upon, cannot be re-opened at the same meeting.
7. Every proposal, motion, resolution or nomination must have a Proposer and Seconder before they are discussed and voted upon.
8. Any amendment to a proposal must be proposed, seconded and discussed before a vote is taken. When the vote is taken, the amendment is voted on firstly.
9. Parliamentary language is the order of the day at meetings. Personal remarks and offensive language should never be permitted at a Club meeting.

If these rules are not followed, any member may protest to the Chairman on a 'point of order'. The Chairman must decide immediately if any action is 'out of order'.

The Role of the Club Chairman

Running any Club is a multi-faceted job and the Rules, when adopted, must be properly interpreted and obeyed. The Chairman is like a team captain and he should be an ambassador for his Club, fostering goodwill whenever and wherever he can. He must understand the procedural details and must be fair to all members, never showing favouritism or using any perceived authority in a manner unbecoming his office. He has a duty to ensure that the business of meetings is conducted in an efficient and proper manner.

The principal duties of the Club Chairman are as follows: -

1. To act as Chairman at all Club Meetings
2. To maintain order and prevent unnecessary disruption.
3. To ensure that meetings are conducted in accordance with the Constitution and Rules of the Club.
4. To ensure that the principles of due process and natural justice are applied to all decisions and determinations made, thereby ensuring that those affected by these decisions are given the opportunity to be heard, insofar as is practicable in the circumstances and when matters of complaint arise against any individual, that he is afforded an opportunity to rebut allegations which might be adduced against him.
5. To ensure that the Minutes of Meetings are recorded by the appointed person.
6. In the event of a deadlock of votes, the Chairman has a casting vote and this casting vote is usually confirmed in the Rules of the Club. Even if the Rules are silent on this issue, it is generally accepted that the Chairman has an inherent casting vote.
7. To ensure the proper conduct of meetings, the Chairman has an inherent power to determine all points of order which arise and the power to adjourn a meeting where it becomes unruly.
8. To declare the results of any election or voting procedure.

The Chairman must do everything necessary to regulate meetings but if he conducts himself improperly or unfairly, he may be called upon to answer for his conduct. Everything he does must be done in good faith and he may not for example, introduce motions of his own or suddenly introduce topics that are not stated on the agenda for the meeting. Neither may he adjourn a meeting if for example, he does not agree with the likely result of a vote.

The Chairman must always remain impartial during the conduct of a meeting and it is important that he sees himself as a facilitator to those members present rather than any sort of 'voice of authority'. He should always afford every member in attendance an opportunity to speak and if he wishes to address the meeting with personal views of his own, he should firstly vacate the chair.

Other ancillary duties of a Club Chairman include: -

- a) To be fully committed to the aims and objectives of the Gun Club
- b) To act as spokesman for the Club
- c) To be familiar with the Constitution, Rules, structure and work of the Club
- d) To ensure, insofar as is possible, that the Club has a planned programme and that all members are aware of this.
- e) To encourage commentary and feedback at meetings and to welcome debate on new ideas or proposals.
- f) To have a good working relationship with all members and to encourage their total participation, sometimes allocating tasks to each of them. (It is a common pitfall in many Clubs that the bulk of work is left with one or two officers. This quickly creates disillusionment and apathy).
- g) To hold regular meetings of the Club and to ensure that every member is properly notified in good time, preferably by letter but nowadays text is seen as a proper instrument of notification as well.
- h) To have an Agenda for each meeting and to fully understand the implications of each item and the practicality of the implementation of that item if agreed and adopted.
- i) To ensure that anyone expected to report to a meeting on some issue or task is aware of that expectation in advance.
- j) To act impartially and mix with all members before and after meetings, never creating the impression that a clique exists.
- k) To ensure that a meeting is never dominated by any one or two individuals and that nobody, including the Chairman himself, is ever long-winded in making a point.
- l) To check with members who have been delegated a responsibility that they understand their task and generally give them recognition and encouragement.

The Role of the Club Secretary

The role of a Club Secretary is fundamentally threefold:

- (i) to organise meetings,
- (ii) to record what transpires at all such meetings and
- (iii) to deal with Club correspondence.

Any good Club Secretary will pay particular attention to the following issues:-

- a) Will liaise with the Chairman and prepare and write an Agenda for each meeting
- b) Will issue a notice of every meeting to all members in good time
- c) Will take and record all Club Minutes
- d) Will deal with all Club correspondence
- e) Will complete all forms on behalf of the Club
- f) If no Fund Officer is in place, the Club Secretary will most likely be the person who handles all Compensation Fund matters.
- g) Will keep all Club records
- h) Will work as part of the team of Club Officers
- i) Will prepare an Annual Report for each AGM which details the activities in the Club for the year just ending, with emphasis on bird releases, vermin control, special events of note and naming those associated with them and finally recommendations, if any, to improve the Club or which would help the role of Secretary.
- j) Will prepare Ballot papers for elections as they arise.

In executing the role of Club Secretary, there are a few DEADLY SINS which include: -

- ~ Being late for meetings
- ~ Forgetting to bring the Minute Book or correspondence
- ~ Forgetting to ensure the venue is available
- ~ Forgetting to prepare an Agenda
- ~ Forgetting to inform all members about the meeting
- ~ Trying to do everything yourself - remember you're a team player. You cannot and should not do everything yourself.

The Role of the Hon. Treasurer

The Hon. Treasurer is the bookkeeper of the Club and is required to keep a record of all financial transactions and will be called upon, especially at the AGM, to identify all income received by the Club, inclusive of membership fees and all payments and expenditure.

In the overall, the Hon. Treasurer has six main functions: -

1. To look after the Bank Account/s of the Club
2. To collect and monitor annual subscriptions
3. To calculate budgets as required and arrange fundraising
4. To keep the accounts of the Club
5. To present interim and year-end Reports
6. To be the 'miser' of the Club

Every Club should have a Bank account and all money received into the Club should be lodged into that account. Likewise all payments made by the Club should be by cheque and there should never be 'cash transactions' of any kind. If this happens, it will eventually lead to turmoil. There should be two 'authorised signatures' required for every cheque and pre-signing of cheques should never take place.

The Role of the Club Delegates

In the normal run of things, Clubs are asked to be represented at County (Regional Game Council - RGC) level by two delegates. This is a very important role for the two concerned persons because they have to: -

- i) Make decisions about issues relevant to their Club
- ii) Bring the views of their Club to RGC level
- iii) Be able to express a wide range of opinions on different issues
- iv) Carry information accurately in both directions
- v) Give intelligent and interesting Reports
- vi) Follow up on various points with the relevant people
- vii) Accept responsibility on behalf of their Club for agreed action
- viii) Act in tandem with Delegates from other Clubs

As in all tasks involving delegation, it is important that the persons asked to act as Delegates have sufficient knowledge of their Clubs' needs and of the regional and national structures they are now about to interface with. It is vitally important that new Delegates be thoroughly briefed by the retiring Delegate/s on matters which may affect their Club but also on current issues at county and national level. Before a Delegate is 'thrown in at the deep end' so to speak, it is always best if he attends RGC meetings along with the Delegate who plans to retire, before that retirement actually takes place so that there is a slow and planned transition.

In reporting back to his Club after each RGC meeting, the Delegate has to ensure that the information he carries is correct and neither overstated nor understated in its relevance and importance. If a Delegate is unsure about something, he should always crosscheck with a Delegate from another Club, rather than inadvertently impart perhaps misleading information. Of course if anything of an important or urgent nature arises at an RGC meeting, the Delegates should inform their Club Chairman or Secretary immediately.

The Role of the Club Trustees

Clubs have no separate legal capacity to own property unless the property is registered in the names of each and every one of the Clubs' members. This is clearly impractical and so therefore where a Club acquires property, usually three Trustees, are generally appointed on behalf of their Club to hold property for and in trust for and for the benefit of the members of their Club. Where there is a need for Trustees in a Club, they should automatically retire at each AGM and be eligible for re-election if they so offer themselves. Provision should be made in the Constitution for the replacement of inactive or non-compliant Trustees and for the appointment of new Trustees to replace existing Trustees.

The role of Trustees is simply to carry out such duties and actions as are directed by the Club.

Disciplinary Matters in a Club

As in all walks of life, indiscipline in a Club is a matter which arises from time to time. When a Club Member appears to be guilty of some or other misdemeanour, he cannot be just turned-out or discarded like a piece of rubbish. Whatever complaint is alleged must be carefully put to him in a controlled manner, he must be given time and he must be allowed offer a defence, rebut the allegation or adduce evidence that may mitigate the penalty to be imposed on him. In short, the PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL JUSTICE and fair play must be thoroughly executed and if not, the Club can land itself in serious trouble.

In most Clubs, disciplinary procedures are carried out by the whole Club. However, in some larger Clubs, the task is delegated to a Sub-Committee often known as the Disciplinary Board. The benefits of having a disciplinary matter heard by a Disciplinary Board is that the member against whom allegations have been made can appeal the Disciplinary Board's determination to the whole Club before proceeding to any higher authority if that be considered prudent.

The procedures for the taking of disciplinary proceedings against a Club Member on the grounds of his allegedly having violated some or other Club Rule or the Club's Constitution or otherwise having acted in a manner prejudicial to the good name of the Club can be summarised thus and in this it is assumed the whole Club will hear the complaint: -

As a prerequisite to the taking of any steps to effect a sanction against a Club Member on the grounds of his having violated some rule or other commandment, it would be necessary that the rule broken be a well known, established and ideally written part of the Club Rules or Constitution. Then, before any dismissal or other penalty imposition takes place, it is necessary to validate the veracity of any allegation (have verifiable witnesses) made against the said Member to ensure that the principles of natural justice and fair play are otherwise fully upheld.

The basic tenets of the validation procedure are as follows:-

1. It is the primary responsibility of the Club of which the Member against whom allegations have been made is a Member, to study and determine

on the veracity of the allegations made against its Member. Such a study should be conducted in accordance with any applicable Club Rules or with the directives of the Regional Game Council to which the Club is affiliated, if such exist or are available.

2. If upon the completion of a study into the allegations, the Club considers that sufficient evidence exists to merit the initiation of disciplinary proceedings against the Member against whom allegations have been made, then disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the Club's Rules and/or the Regional Game Council's directives should be initiated.
3. In any organisation, disciplinary proceedings against a Member against whom allegations have been made must, in general terms, accord with the principles of natural justice and in particular: -
 - a) The Member against whom allegations have been made must be fully acquainted with good notice of the setting up of the disciplinary proceedings and also the date upon which the matter will be dealt with by the local Club.
 - b) The Member against whom allegations have been made must be fully acquainted with the allegations which have been made against him and the evidence which will be given to substantiate these allegations. He should also be made aware of the possible penalties which may be imposed upon him if the allegations are found to be true.
 - c) The Member against whom allegations have been made should be asked whether he admits or denies the allegations.
 - d) If he admits the allegations, he should be afforded the opportunity of bringing to the attention of the Club any mitigating factors which might influence the severity of the penalty to be imposed.
 - e) The Member against whom allegations have been made must be afforded an adequate opportunity to defend himself at the hearing of the disciplinary proceedings and if he wishes, he may be represented at those proceedings by another person on his behalf. The Member against whom allegations have been made must also be afforded the opportunity of questioning the evidence adduced against him and calling witnesses to rebut that evidence.

- f) If the Member against whom allegations have been made fails to attend the hearing of the disciplinary proceedings, the evidence against him should be heard and on the basis of the evidence adduced at the hearing of the disciplinary proceedings, a determination should be made on the veracity of the allegations and if found to be true, an appropriate penalty imposed. In advance of the hearing of the disciplinary proceedings, the Member against whom allegations have been made should be advised that this is how the Club will proceed to deal with the allegations in the circumstance of the Member against whom allegations have been made failing to attend the hearing of the disciplinary proceedings.
- g) The Club should take two decisions:-
 - i) Determine whether or not the Member against whom allegations have been made was involved and,
 - ii) if it determines that the Member was involved in the misdemeanour, impose an appropriate penalty on the Member for such activity.
- h) The Member against whom allegations have been made should be afforded a right of appeal from the determination of the local Club to the Regional Game Council in accordance with the respective rules of the Club and/or the Regional Game Council.
- i) The Regional Game Council should conduct a rehearing of the initial disciplinary proceedings.

Appendix 1.

Suggested Club Constitution
Rules and Standing Orders

Constitution, rules and standing orders of _____ Club

1. Title:

The Club shall be titled _____ Club or
Game Preservation Association” hereinafter called “the Club”.

2 Aims and Objectives:

- a. To preserve club lands for the purpose of prohibiting the taking or killing of game, or the pursuit of game thereon by persons other than those authorised by the Club.
- b. To develop and improve the game stocks on club lands.
- c. To promote the conservation of wildlife and its habitat on club lands.
- d. To carry out such programmes of vermin control as the Club may from time to time determine.
- e. To co-operate with landowners and An Garda Síochána by ensuring the observance of all State laws.

3. Qualification for Membership:

- a. Membership shall be confined to persons either currently residing or previously resident in the area covered by the Club, or drawing their livelihood mainly from within this area.
- b. It shall be obligatory for Club Members to join the N.A.R.G.C.. Compensation Fund and to remain a member of the N.A.R.G.C. Compensation Fund throughout the period of Club membership.
- c. All applications for membership must be made in writing to the Club Secretary giving the names of the applicant’s Proposer and Secunder.
- d. Applicants must agree to abide by the rules of the Club and must satisfy the Club as to their suitability for membership.
- e. An application for membership shall be deemed to be accepted if approved by a simple majority of the Club Members present and voting at any Club meeting. Should the Club refuse acceptance of a membership application, the Committee shall not be obliged to give any reasons for such refusal.

4. Officers of the Club:

The Officers of the Club shall consist of the following: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Safety Officer and Compensation Fund Officer. Officers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Club and shall hold office for a period of one year. All Officers shall be eligible for re-election. The Club may appoint other Officers from time to time and under such terms as it considers appropriate. Such other Officers as may be appointed shall retire at the next Annual General Meeting following their appointment and shall be eligible for re-appointment. The Club may elect three Trustees at the Annual General Meeting from among its members. The duties and functions of the Trustees shall be as directed in writing to the Trustees by the Club from time to time. Trustees shall automatically retire at each AGM and shall be eligible for re-election. No serving Officer shall be eligible to act as a Trustee. A Trustee who acts non-compliantly or who fails to carry out the directions of the Club, may be stood down by the Club at any time and replaced by another.

5. Committees:

The Club may, at its Annual General Meeting, elect working Committees which shall operate under such terms as the Club may from time to time determine. The number of members of any Committee and its composition shall be determined by the Club but shall include all elected Officers of the Club. The Club may also appoint Sub-Committees as it may deem necessary. The Club shall also, at its Annual General Meeting, elect a Disciplinary Board which shall be comprised of three persons and which shall deal with any disciplinary matters which arise in accordance with the terms of Rule 2.

6. Affiliation and Membership:

The Club shall affiliate as a member of _____ Regional Game Council which body shall be a member of the National Association of Regional Game Councils (NARGC) representing Co. _____

7. Compensation Fund:

The Club shall arrange for the protection of its members in accordance with the terms of the NARGC Compensation Fund by ensuring that all of its Members are, at all times, members of the said Fund.

Rules of the Club

Rule 1 - Membership:

Each Member shall be required to pay an Annual Membership Fee. The Membership Fee shall be reviewed annually at the Annual General Meeting.

Members shall be required, when shooting, to have their Membership Card in their possession and are required to produce same for inspection by other Members or landowners.

Members shall be required to show respect for the property of Landowners and acts of disrespect, including damage to fences, crops and/or leaving gates open will be treated as a breach of the terms of a Member's membership of the Club.

Members shall be required to observe the boundaries of other Clubs.

Members shall be required to actively participate in all Club activities including fund raising, predator and pest control and re-stocking.

Members shall be required to show respect for the Officers and other Members of the Club and for the Officers and Members of other Clubs and parent bodies including the Regional Game Council and the National Association of Regional Game Councils.

Any Member found to be in breach of these rules or held to have behaved in a manner damaging to the interests of the Club shall be admonished, suspended, fined, expelled or be the subject of such other penalty as the Club considers fit.

Members shall be required to abide and be bound by the Constitution and Rules of the National Association of Regional Game Councils.

Rule 2 - Disciplinary Procedure:

The Disciplinary Board shall have the power to hear and determine any complaints whether made by a landowner, whose property forms part of the Club preserves, a member of the Club or the Regional Game Council to which the Club is affiliated or the National Association of Regional Game

Councils that a Member has acted in a manner damaging to the interests of the Club and in the event of the Disciplinary Board determining that a Member has acted in such a manner, it shall be entitled to impose whatever penalty it considers appropriate, provided however, that the Member against whom the complaint has been made shall be entitled to appeal the decision of the Disciplinary Board within 2 weeks (14 days) of being notified in writing by the Disciplinary Board of its decision in which case the Club shall re-hear and determine the complaint and shall be entitled to uphold, vary or reject the determination of the Disciplinary Board and the penalty imposed by it.

Rule 3 - Meetings:

The Annual General Meeting of the Club shall be held each year.

The Club shall be entitled to adopt such further rules as it may deem necessary to fulfil its aims and objectives provided however that such rules are not contrary to State Laws or contrary to the Constitution and Rules of _____ Regional Game Council and the National Association of Regional Game Councils.

The Committee shall meet at such times as shall be decided from time to time by the Members thereof but no less than three meetings shall be held in any one year.

The Chairman shall be entitled to convene Special General Meetings of the Club to deal with any urgent business pertaining to the Club. A Special General Meeting may also be convened at the written request of at least one third of the Club's Members stating in writing the reason for the convening of such a meeting and such special meeting shall be held within twenty one (21) days of the written request being delivered to the Club Secretary. No special meeting of the Club shall be convened without Club Members receiving at least 48 hours notice.

The quorum for general Club meetings shall be one quarter of the total membership of the Club and for the AGM, one third of the total membership of the Club.

Each outgoing Officer, Committee and sub-Committee Member shall deliver a report to the Annual General Meeting which will also deal with the Election of Officers and the appointment of Committees and sub-Committees. The Annual General Meeting shall also include a general discussion on the business and affairs of the Club.

Rule 4 - Finance:

All monies and funds of the Club shall be deposited, as soon as possible after receipt, in such Bank as the Club may by resolution designate. All monies and funds shall be held in the name of the Treasurer, Chairman and Secretary for and on behalf of the Club. The name of the Club shall be designated for Bank account purposes. All cheques and withdrawals of funds, on behalf of the Club, shall be signed by the Treasurer and Chairperson or Secretary. All payments by the Club shall be by cheque only. Proper books or accounts shall be maintained up to date at all times.

Rule 5 - Voting:

Each Member shall be entitled to a single vote in Club elections. Elections may be by secret ballot. Voting in all other matters may be by secret ballot also at the discretion of the Chairman and each Member shall be entitled to one vote in relation to such matters. In the event of there being an equality of votes in any ballot, other than in elections, the Chairman shall have a casting or second vote. In the event of a tie in any election the position shall be filled by lottery.

Rule 6 - Officer Duties:

a. Chairman:

The Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the Club and Committees and shall see to it that the decisions are put into effect.

b. Vice-Chairman:

The Vice-Chairman shall, in the absence of the Chairman, carry out the functions of the Chairman

c. In the event of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman being unable to attend a scheduled meeting, the Members shall elect a Chairman who shall chair that particular meeting.

d. Honorary Secretary:

The Honorary Secretary shall convene all meetings of the Club, its Committees or sub-Committees at times and venues as shall be determined by these bodies. The Honorary Secretary shall prepare an Agenda of all business to be submitted for discussion and to be dealt with at each meeting of the Club. The Honorary Secretary shall

maintain proper and adequate minutes of all such meetings and shall submit such minutes for approval at the next succeeding meeting.

The Honorary Secretary shall also maintain a proper record of the names of Members who attend Club meetings along with any other official records of the Club and the Honorary Secretary shall be responsible for the Clubs official correspondence.

The Honorary Secretary shall notify the Hon. Secretary of _____ Regional Game Council of any changes in the Officers/Club's Delegates of the Club to _____ Regional Game Council within fourteen days of the Clubs Annual General Meeting and shall forward the statistics form or such other information as may be required by _____ Regional Game Council. The Honorary Secretary shall also present a Report on the Club's activities to the Annual General Meeting.

e. Honorary Treasurer:

The Hon. Treasurer shall utilise the funds of the Club in such a manner as the Committee may from time to time direct and no expenditure of the funds of the Club shall be made unless previously authorised by the Club. The Hon. Treasurer shall present a Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet to each AGM of the Club.

f. Safety Officer:

The Safety Officer shall be responsible for creating an awareness amongst the Club's Members of the importance of Safety while shooting and shall undertake such further duties as may be assigned to him from time to time with regard to safety while shooting and safe carriage and storage of guns and sporting equipment.

g. Compensation Fund Officer:

The Compensation Fund Officer shall ensure that all Compensation Fund Contract forms are returned to _____ and shall be responsible for ensuring that all Club Members are Members of the NARGC Compensation Fund at all times.

Rule 7 - Interpretation of Constitution:

The Club is the sole authority for the interpretation of this Constitution and of any rule.

Rule 8 - Amendment of Constitution:

Only the Annual General Meeting of the Club or a Special General Meeting shall have power to alter or amend this Constitution and Rules. Any proposed alteration or amendment to this Constitution and Rules shall be submitted in writing to the Honorary Secretary not less than 28 days in advance of the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting of the Club. Any alteration or amendment to this Constitution and Rules will require to be carried by a two-thirds majority of all accredited members present.

Standing Orders

1. All Club Meetings must commence within fifteen (15) minutes of the appointed start time.
2. All Speakers must address the Chair.
3. Resolutions for debate must be worded in the form of a motion and seconded.
4. The Proposer, Seconder and all in favour of or against a motion may each speak for up to five (5) minutes.
5. Amendments must be proposed and seconded.
6. The Proposer has the right of reply.
7. The Chairman's ruling, on matters of debate, is final.

Appendix 2.

**Application for Membership of
Club**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please accept my application for membership of the above Club. I agree without reservation to abide by the Rules of the Club as laid down in the Club's Constitution / Rules if my application is accepted. I agree to fully participate in all the activities of the Club. Should the Committee refuse acceptance of me as either a Probationary Member or a Full Member, I accept I am not entitled to reasons for such refusals.

Signed: _____(Applicant)

Name in block letters: _____

Address: _____

Phone No: _____

Email: _____

Please answer the following questions:

1. Do you have previous shotgun shooting experience? Yes / No (*circle one*)
2. If the answer to question (1) is "yes" approximately how many years have you been shooting? _____ Years.
3. Do you live within the Club Boundaries? Yes / No (*circle one*)
4. Are you a landowner in the Club area? Yes / No (*circle one*)
5. Are you a current Member of another Club? Yes / No (*circle one*)
If the answer to question (5) is "yes" please name the Club and your position in that Club.
Club Name: _____

Position in Club: Officer / Committee Member / Ordinary Member (*circle one*)

If the answer to question (5) is “no”, please list any Club’s that you have been a Member of in the last ten years.

Proposed by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Declaration by Applicant

I HEREBY DECLARE that to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, the details on this application form are true and accurate and I HEREBY AGREE to abide by the decision of Club Committee to accept or reject my application for membership.

Applicant’s signature: _____

For Committee Use Only

Application No.: _____

Date interviewed by the Committee: _____

Accepted / Rejected / Waiting List

Reason for Committees decision: _____

Signed: _____ Hon Sec.

Appendix 3.

Name of Club

Recipient's Name
Recipient's Address

Dear Mr ?,

It has come to the notice of the Committee of the above Club that your Club Membership Fee and Compensation Fund Membership Fee are both outstanding for some considerable time and are therefore overdue for payment. The Club Membership Fee for the current year is €_____ and the Compensation Fund Membership Fee is €_____, making a total of €_____ due in all.

Unless the Treasurer of this Club, (state the Treasurer's **full** name and **full** postal address here), receives the said sum of €_____ from you within ten (10) days from the date of this letter, your membership of this Club will thereupon cease and you will be no longer protected by the Compensation Fund and this Club and/or its Officers shall thereafter have no responsibility for liability or damage arising from your shooting activities, howsoever caused.

Yours sincerely,
For and on behalf of _____ Club.

(Secretary's Name)
HON. SECRETARY.

