

Constitution of

The Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain & Ireland

1: Name

The society shall be known as: The Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland

2: Aims

The aims of the society are:

- a) To promote interest in and study of Thomas Merton and his concerns.
- b) To encourage the formation of local groups or chapters of the Society.
- c) To encourage the publication of works by or about Thomas Merton in the United Kingdom and Ireland.
- d) To issue twice yearly The Merton Journal, containing articles, book reviews and other information of interest to the members of the Society.

3: Membership

Membership shall be open, subject to the discretion of the Committee, to all persons interested in the aims of the Society.

- a) Full Members
- b) Honorary Members. Honorary Life Membership may be granted to any person, who, in the opinion of the Committee, has rendered outstanding service to the Society, either directly or indirectly. Such membership shall carry the rights of full membership but shall be free from subscriptions.

All members shall abide by the constitution of the Society. The Committee shall have the power to expel any member whose conduct, in the opinion of a majority of the full Committee, renders that person unfit to be a member of the Society. No member shall be expelled without first having been given an opportunity to appear before the Committee.

4: College of Patrons

The committee can appoint up to 6 people who are willing to be part of a College of Patrons of the Society as non-executive figureheads. They may attend committee meetings if they so wish. Patrons are, de facto, Honorary Members of the Society.

5: Subscriptions

The annual subscription for membership shall be set by the committee.

- a) The financial year shall run from 1st January to 31st December.
- b) All subscriptions shall be due and payable at the beginning of the financial year. Members in arrears have no voting rights.
- c) A member shall be deemed to have resigned from the Society, if, by the following 30th September, the subscription has not been paid.
- d) The Committee shall have the power to waive or reduce subscriptions in special circumstances for a period not exceeding 2 years.

6: Finance

All money received by the Society shall be promptly deposited in the Society's bank accounts. Withdrawals require solely the signature of the Society's treasurer. On request of the Chair or Vice Chair the treasurer must produce within 14 days a full and detailed statement of the Society's financial position.

7: Membership of the Society's Committee

The Society's affairs shall be administered by a Committee elected at the Biennial General Meeting. The Committee, in whom the Society's assets shall be vested, shall consist of:

- a) A Chair who will preside at all meetings at which she/he is present. No member may hold this position for more than two consecutive terms of two years unless she/he is prepared to stand and there are no other nominations. She/he may be re-elected after a break of one term.
- b) The committee will appoint a vice chair from among their number at the first committee meeting after the BGM
- c) Up to 8 ordinary Committee members who will be elected for a period of up to 4 years.
- d) Not more than 2 co-opted members who have full voting powers - such members are elected to the Committee by the Committee to replace any Committee member who leaves mid-term. At the end of that term their membership ceases.
- e) Not more than 2 co-opted members who are not permitted to vote - such members, who need to be familiar with the inner workings of the Society, are elected to the Committee by the Committee.

8: Specific Tasks undertaken by the Committee

The following tasks will be undertaken by members of the Committee:

- a) The role of Treasurer. She/he will be responsible for:
 - o Keeping the Society's accounts and a register of assets.
 - o Advising the Committee on all financial matters.
 - o Preparing the accounts for audit, and presenting them at the BGM.
- b) The role of Membership Secretary. She/he will be responsible for maintaining a master roll of Members and Honorary Members.
- c) The role of Journal Editor.
- d) The role of Meetings Secretary. She/he will be responsible for:
 - o Keeping the minutes of all the meetings of the Society, and distributing them as appropriate.
 - o All arrangements necessary pertaining to meetings of the Committee.
- e) Other tasks as necessary to allow for the smooth running of the Society, and to promote its aims.

9: Events

Each event put on by the Society will be run under the aegis of a nominated sub-committee which will be responsible for all aspects of the event.

10: Local Groups and Chapters

With the approval of the Committee, provided that they subscribe to the aims of the Society and include at least 3 members of the Society, local groups and chapters may be formed. They may use the Society's name in any promotion. On request the Society may make financial contributions to support their work. They must make an annual written report to the Committee of their proceedings, submitted to the Chair by 28th February of the following year.

11: Election of Chair

- a) The new Chair is elected by the Committee members with voting rights at the Committee meeting prior to the BGM.
- b) Nominations for Chair can only come from existing Committee members with voting rights, and must be confirmed by the nominee at the meeting or previously in writing.
- c) The election for Chair will take place first. If there is more than one nomination for the Chair the Committee will appoint one of its members not standing for office, using the procedures outlined in 12b to oversee the election. This member will have the casting vote in the event of a tie.
- d) The newly-appointed Chair will take up their post at the following BGM, and is automatically a member of the new Committee.

12: Committee Standing Orders

- a) The quorum for the Committee will be 5, and must include either the Chair or Vice-Chair. In the absence of a quorum business may be dealt with but any decisions taken only become valid after ratification at the next meeting at which a quorum exists.
- b) Decisions of the Committee are to be determined by a majority vote of the Committee members with voting powers present. In the event of a tie the Chair has the casting vote.
- c) Committee meetings may be called by the Chair, the Vice-Chair or any vote of the Committee.
- d) It is the joint responsibility of the Chair and Vice-Chair to ensure that the Committee meets at least twice per year.

13: Biennial General meeting

- a) The Biennial General Meeting will be held within a month of Easter every even-numbered year, normally during the Society's residential conference.
- b) The quorum for the meeting will be not less than 12 full members of the Society.
- c) The agenda for the meeting will be:
 - a) Apologies for absence
 - b) Minutes of the previous BGM
 - c) Chair's report
 - d) Treasurer's report
 - e) Membership Secretary's report
 - f) Journal Editor's report
 - g) Reports from any local groups or chapters
 - h) Election of the new Committee members
 - i) Any other business
 - j) Date of the next meeting
- d) Items a) to g) shall be chaired by the out-going Chair and the remaining business by the incoming Chair.
- e) Nominations for Committee members will only be valid if confirmed by the nominee at the meeting or previously in writing. Each nomination must be seconded by 2 full members.
- f) For every third continuous term of office Committee members seeking re-election must be nominated by 2 Committee members.
- g) It is the new Chair's responsibility to oversee the election of the new Committee members and to ensure that it reflects the wishes of the majority of the Society's members present.
- h) Items to be raised by members under Any Other Business must be notified to the Secretary not less than one month before the BGM.
- i) As soon as is practicable following the BGM the new Committee will meet to allocate tasks and responsibilities for the new term.

14: Extraordinary General meeting

- a) Extraordinary General meetings may be called by the Committee or not less than 10 members of the Society, the date of the meeting being the earliest convenient as decided by the Committee. At least 6 week's notice in writing must be given to the Secretary, who in turn shall give members at least 3 week's notice in writing of the agenda. No other business may be transacted at the EGM.
- b) The quorum for the EGM shall be at least 12 full members of the Society.

15: Amendments to the Constitution

The Constitution may be amended at an EGM called for that purpose or at a BGM.

16. Winding up of the Society

- a) The decision to wind up the Society may be taken either at an EGM or BGM.
- b) The funds of the Society shall, after the sale of all assets and the payment of all outstanding debts, be disposed of, in line with the Aims of the Society, as directed by members at the final EGM or BGM.

Formally adopted at BGM 13th April 2012