THE SOUTH EASTERN CIRCUIT

THAMES VALLEY BAR MESS

Constitution

The constitution of the Thames Valley Bar Mess

1. Name

The organisation shall be known as the Thames Valley Bar Mess ("the Bar Mess").

Geographic Area

The Bar Mess is associated with the following geographic areas: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire.

The geographic description reflects the historic courts and professional community associated with the Bar Mess but does not restrict membership.

---

2. Relationship with the South Eastern Circuit

1. The Bar Mess forms part of the South Eastern Circuit of the Bar of England and Wales.
2. This Constitution shall be interpreted consistently with the South Eastern Circuit Constitution.
3. In the event of any inconsistency between this Constitution and the Constitution of the South Eastern Circuit, the Circuit Constitution shall prevail.

---

3. Objects

The objects of the Bar Mess are:

a. to promote collegiality and professional cooperation among members of the Circuit;

b. to support the professional life and wellbeing of members practising in courts associated with the Bar Mess;

c. to facilitate communication between members and the judiciary or court administration where appropriate;

d. to promote the work and objectives of the South Eastern Circuit;

e. to organise professional, educational and social activities for members.

---

4. Membership

1. Membership of the Bar Mess is open only to members of the **South Eastern Circuit**.
2. Membership of the Bar Mess is **voluntary and opt-in**.
3. Members of the Circuit may belong to more than one Bar Mess.
4. The Bar Mess may determine an annual membership contribution where appropriate.

---

5. Officers

The Bar Mess shall have the following officers:

- Chair
- Junior
- Secretary
- Treasurer

The officers together constitute the leadership of the Bar Mess.

---

6. Terms of Office, Elections and Governance

1. Officers are elected by the members of the Mess, for terms ordinarily of one year, renewable, consistently with the Constitution of the South Eastern Circuit. The Chair leads the Mess and is its point of contact with the Circuit.
2. The Bar Mess may vary these terms by resolution at a General Meeting.
3. Governance Safeguard - If at any time the Bar Mess does not have sufficient officers to operate effectively, the Leader or Executive Committee of the South Eastern Circuit may make temporary arrangements to ensure continuity of governance until officers are elected or appointed.

---

7. Court Representatives

1. The Bar Mess may appoint Court Representatives for courts associated with its geographic area.
2. Court Representatives may assist with communication between members, the judiciary and court administration where appropriate.
3. Court Representatives may assist the officers in organising professional or social events linked to particular courts.

---

8. Committee

1. The Bar Mess may establish a committee consisting of the officers and such additional members as it considers appropriate.
2. The Bar Mess is not required to maintain a committee and may operate solely through its officers.

---

9. Meetings

1. The Mess holds such meetings and events as its members wish, manages its own local events, and may set and collect an annual subscription on a basis its members determine.

2. The Bar Mess shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year.
3. The AGM shall:

- receive reports from officers;
- conduct elections where necessary;
- consider matters affecting the Bar Mess.

3. Meetings may be held in person, electronically, or by hybrid means.
4. Voting may take place electronically where appropriate.

---

10. Extraordinary Meetings

1. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called:

- by the Chair; or
- by a request from members of the Bar Mess.

2. Matters affecting the governance of the South Eastern Circuit more broadly may be referred to the Circuit Executive for consideration of a Circuit-wide meeting.

---

11. Funds

Any funds are held and applied for the benefit of the Mess's members and activities, with a simple record kept and available to members on request.

---

12. Harassment and Bullying

1. The South Eastern Circuit Harassment and Bullying Policy, as adopted and amended from time to time by the South Eastern Circuit, applies to all activities and events organised by this Bar Mess.
2. Members participating in Bar Mess events are expected to comply with that policy.
3. Any complaint concerning conduct occurring at or in connection with a Bar Mess activity shall be addressed in accordance with the Circuit policy.
4. Any determination under that policy is solely for the purposes of participation in Circuit or Bar Mess activities and does not constitute a regulatory finding.

---

13. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by resolution of the Bar Mess at a General Meeting, provided any amendment is consistent with the Constitution of the South Eastern Circuit.
