



**The Statutes of the Georgian Orthodox Church
Diocese in Western Europe
London Parish of Saint George**

**ARTICLE 1
P A R I S H**

Section 1
D e f i n i t i o n s

Georgian Orthodox Church (hereafter referred to as GOC) Diocese (hereinafter called GOC DWE) London Parish of Saint George (hereinafter referred to as GOC London Parish) is a parish of the Georgian Orthodox Church Patriarchate Diocese in Western Europe.

Section 2
L e g a l b a s e s a n d c h a r a c t e r

The GOC London Parish is established to advance the Christian faith in accordance with the teachings and practices of the Georgian Orthodox Church.

The doctrine, discipline and worship of the GOC London Parish are those of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, rooted in the Holy Tradition and taught by the Holy Scriptures, the Ecumenical and Provincial Councils and the Holy Fathers. GOC London Parish Worship and work is bound by Orthodox Faith, its canons, rules and regulations of GOC and GOC DWE and Laws of England and Wales.

If and/or while Worship and other work is served and conducted in, at, or, from a temporary base, GOC London Parish is bound by formal or informal agreements between the host Diocese's presiding Bishop (or other formal head of the host organisation) and the presiding Bishop of GOC DWE and between the Vicar of the host parish (or other manager in charge) and the visiting or permanent vicar of GOC London Parish.

Section 3
L a n g u a g e

The two working languages of the GOC London Parish are English and Georgian. Other languages might be used if needed.

Section 4
M e m b e r s h i p

Those eligible to become formal members of GOC London Parish are all those Orthodox Christians aged eighteen and above who have lived in the London area and the UK for at

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least six months and intend to live there for more than one year, under the authority of its Bishop and Vicar appointed by him, regularly participate in Worship, are preparing to receive or receiving the Holy Communion from him and other authorised clergy and who abide by the provisions of those Statutes.

In order to be elected or to have voting rights to elect GOC London Parish officers and other ruling council members, members must at least twice a year receive the Holy Communion from the Vicar or other authorised clergy.

From the date of its formal registration and establishment, with the blessing of the presiding Bishop of GOC DWE and visiting or permanent Vicar, the formal founders of the GOC London Parish are automatically voting members for a further two years and form the provisional council with the Vicar as its Chairman, spiritual and formal leader.

After that, within two years, the Vicar and the provisional council shall organise the next elections of GOC London parish officers and its council.

Further, all of those who are eligible and wish to become members of the parish with voting or non-voting rights must fill in the appropriate application form approved by the council in order to form the membership list and electoral role.

The protection of the given data is guaranteed by existing Laws of England and Wales, rules and regulations of the GOC.

The main rules and regulations governing elections of GOC London Parish Officers and its Council are provided in further sections of these statutes. Others shall be determined by its Council.



ARTICLE II
THE VICAR OF THE GOC LONDON PARISH

Section 1
D e f i n i t i o n s

In the absence of the presiding Bishop of GOC DWE the visiting or permanent Vicar of the GOC London Parish, who is appointed by the Bishop and acts on his authority and behalf, is the spiritual and formal head, governor of the parish.

Section 2
F u n c t i o n s

- a. As the spiritual and formal head, governor of the GOC London Parish, Chairman of its General Meeting and Council the Vicar, surrounded by other clergy and lay members, shall:
 - i. offer the Eucharistic sacrifice ‘on behalf of all and for all’;
 - ii. pray for members of GOC London Parish ‘that they may be one’;
 - iii. lead and/or supervise the worship of the parish;
 - iv. receive the Holy Chrism from the GOC DWE presiding Bishop;
 - v. either personally or through other authorised clergy receive new members into communion with the Church;
 - vi. serve as a link between the GOC London Parish and the rest of the GOC DWE;
 - vii. lay down guidelines for the relationship of the GOC London Parish to other bodies.
- b. As teacher the Vicar shall:
 - i. proclaim the Gospel and seek to spread the Christian Faith;
 - ii. expound the fullness of the Christian Faith in accordance with the Tradition of the Orthodox Church and ensure that this fullness is faithfully preserved in the teaching of all who are under his care and authority;
 - iii. be responsible for the Christian education of the clergy and laity of the GOC London Parish.
- c. As a pastor the Vicar shall:
 - i. on behalf of the Bishop exercise the power given by Christ to the Apostles to bind and to loose;
 - ii. prepare servers, prepare and ordain readers, if needed, teach, prepare and present to the Bishop and other authorised Orthodox Christian bodies suitable candidates for ordination as sub deacons, deacons and priests for the GOC London Parish;



- iii. exercise pastoral discipline over clergy and laity in all cases not calling for the special procedures of GOC DWE, GOC Patriarchate and other authorised Orthodox Christian bodies;
- iv. lead and/or supervise all services and ensure that they are performed according to the traditions of Orthodox Christian Faith;
- v. act as custodian of any object that has been consecrated for use in the worship of the Church;
- vi. serve as Chairman of the Parish General Meeting and the Parish Council;
- vii. delegate his responsibility of the Chair of General Meeting and Parish Council to other clergy, or the highest ranked parish officer or other members of the Parish Council in the event of his absence (this provision is especially relevant until/ when the parish has a visiting Vicar).

Section 3 A p p o i n t m e n t

Appointment, retirement or dismissal of the Vicar is made only by a presiding Bishop of the GOC DWE in consultation with GOC London Parish, according to Orthodox Christian Faith, rules and regulations of GOC Patriarchate.



ARTICLE III

GOC LONDON PARISH AS A LOCAL EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITY

Section 1 D e f i n i t i o n s

The life of the one diocesan Eucharistic community is manifested in a given place or area through the regular celebration of the Eucharist under the local presidency of the Bishop, an Assistant Bishop or a Vicar appointed by the presiding Bishop.

The Parish is a Community, having at its head a Vicar, the parish priest, whose members have accepted responsibility for the maintenance and development of Church life in a particular place or area, and who have undertaken to organise themselves under elected parish officers and with a Parish Council in accordance with these Statutes.

Section 2 F u n c t i o n

GOC London Parish serves as a centre of Church life in which the members of the royal priesthood, clergy and laity:

- a. realise the fellowship of the Church in its sacramental life and prayer;
- b. proclaim the Gospel and teach the Orthodox Faith;
- c. work together ‘for the building up of the body of Christ’ through pastoral concern and care, both within the Church and in the community amongst whom they live.

Section 3 S t r u c t u r e

- a. The GOC London Parish has its head the GOC DWE presiding Bishop, and/or Assistant Bishop or a Vicar to whom the Bishop delegates his ministry of local oversight and who by virtue of his ordination and the authority given him by the presiding Bishop, shall:
 - i. celebrate the Holy Mysteries and lead the Community in prayer;
 - ii. take responsibility for ensuring that the Gospel is preached and the Orthodox Faith is taught;
 - iii. act as Pastor and spiritual father of his flock, treating all equally, ‘not [...] with respect of persons’;
 - iv. supervise the worship of the Community and ensure that the appearance of the place of worship is suitable for liturgical use;



- b. The presiding Vicar, who in the name of the Bishop blesses the activities of his Community, shall be informed and consulted concerning any significant initiative on the life of the Community; and for his part shall consult with the Community, so that there may always be unity, cooperation and mutual trust.

Section 4

E s t a b l i s h m e n t a n d D i s s o l u t i o n o f t h e G O C L o n d o n P a r i s h .

GOC London Parish is formed by the visiting or permanent Vicar appointed by the presiding Bishop of GOC DWE and a group of eligible Orthodox Christians blessed by him.

- a. If the presiding GOC DWE Bishop feels that the GOC London Parish has ceased or should be ceased to function as such, he may, after consultation with the Vicar and members of the parish with voting rights and with the approval of GOC Patriarchate dissolve it. In this case GOC London Parish shall:
 - i. transfer all of its property to the custody of the GOC DWE or directly to GOC Patriarchate.
 - ii. deregister as a religious charity according to Laws of England and Wales;

Section 5

P a r i s h M e e t i n g s

- a. GOC London Parish should hold meetings regularly, but in any event at least once a year. All parish meetings shall be announced to voting or non-voting members of the GOC London Parish at any Liturgy or prayer service. If there is no such Liturgy or service, the announcement shall be by letter, or/and by e-mail, or/and by other means of communication, at least six weeks before the date of the meeting.
- b. The functions of the Parish Meeting shall be:
 - i. at the intervals and according to the procedure laid down by GOC London parish's bye-laws to elect the officers of the parish and other members of the Parish Council;
 - ii. regularly to discuss, initiate and approve measures to strengthen the life of the parish;
 - iii. to authorise the Parish Council to purchase, sell or encumber property.
- c. The chairman of the GOC London Parish Meeting shall be the visiting or permanent Vicar or member of the clergy, or with blessing of the Vicar the highest parish officer or other member of the council;
- d. The Chairman/woman shall have a casting vote in the event of a tie;



- e. The parish Vicar or the Chairman/woman with the approval of the parish council, may invite other persons to attend and speak but without the right to vote;
- f. The members of the group 'Friends of GOC London parish' (an institution which is defined further in this statutes) may attend meetings and speak but do not have the right to vote.
- g. All decisions of the parish meetings shall be communicated by its chairman to the Bishop and shall be valid unless he expresses formal disapproval within thirty days of receipt.

Section 6

P a r i s h o f f i c e r s

Among the officers of the parish shall be:

- a. Churchwardens, the number of whom is determined by the Vicar and one of whom may be Head Churchwarden. Churchwardens, as senior lay officers of the parish, shall under the guidance of the parish council be responsible for the care of parish property, the provision of supplies for church use and full lay participation in all the practical aspects of parish life;
- b. A secretary of the parish, who shall keep the minutes of the Parish General Meeting and Parish Council and shall be responsible for correspondence with the Council and the preparation of the Membership List and Electoral Roll
- c. A treasurer, who shall not be a Vicar or in the pay of the parish council, but may be one of the churchwardens, shall be responsible for the preparation and presentation of the parish budget, its accounts and shall supervise all financial transactions.

Section 7

T h e P a r i s h C o u n c i l

- a. The Parish Council is the executive body of the Parish General Meeting, presenting to its proposals for the furtherance of parish life and implementing its decisions.

Council members are trustees of GOC London Parish and are subject to the Laws of England and Wales with their consequences.

The Parish Council may establish committees, subcommittees or action groups to study proposals and help implement decisions and shall appoint the members of any such committees.



- b. The members of the Parish Council, in addition to the parish Vicar and other members of the clergy serving in the parish, shall be the parish wardens, treasurer and secretary, choirmaster and a number of lay members agreed by the General Meeting.
- c. The parish Vicar shall be the Chairman of the Parish Council, and has a casting vote in the event of a tie. In his absence with his blessing other member of the clergy or the head Churchwarden or other wardens or council members shall chair the meeting.
- d. The chairman of the Parish Council may, with the agreement of the Parish Council, invite other persons to attend a meeting but without the right to vote.
- e. If the parish Vicar disagrees with a decision of the Parish Council his disagreement is recorded in the minutes and the matter is referred to the GOC DWE Bishop and Parish General Meeting and the Bishop makes a decision based on GOC Parish Meeting and his responsibility of pastoral care.
- f. Apart from the Vicar, other clergy serving in the parish and choirmaster, as trustees, council members cannot be employed by parish or receive any financial benefits, payments other than expenses incurred when acting with approval of the Council.

Section 8

P a r i s h B y – L a w s

- a. GOC London Parish may adopt a set of bye-laws or articles of association, and a copy of these as originally promulgated or amended from time to time shall be sent to the Bishop and shall be valid unless he expresses formal disapproval within three months of receipt.
- b. All such bye-laws must be consistent with the Orthodox Christian Faith, rules and regulations of GOC DWE, GOC Patriarchate, agreements of GOC DWE or/and GOC Patriarchate or/and GOC London Parish with outside bodies and Laws of England and Wales.

Section 9

P a r i s h P r o p e r t y

Property purchased in the name of the parish shall, in the event of a dispute in the parish, remain with the Diocese or with that section of the parish that adheres to the Diocese.



ARTICLE IV ELECTIONS

Section 1 M e m b e r s h i p

Electoral Roll list

- a. Any Orthodox Christian eighteen years of age and above, who has lived in UK and in particular the London area for the past six months and intends to remain for the duration of at least one more year, and has abided by these statutes may obtain inclusion on the membership list.
- b. Any member who shall receive the Holy Communion at the GOC London Parish by the Vicar or other authorised clergy at least twice within the previous years may obtain inclusion on the Electoral Roll by requesting that his/her name be added to the list.
- c. At the time of the formal establishment of the parish, membership and voting rights are governed by the article 1, section 4 of these Statutes.

Section 2

- d. The secretary of GOC London Parish shall complete the list of members annually at the date agreed by the council and the Vicar and/or other authorised clergy shall confirm the rights of eligible members to vote.
- e. On the basis of that confirmation the secretary shall complete the electoral roll list at a date agreed by the council but not the latest than sixty days before elections.
- f. Anybody who is not eligible by these statutes or/and has not abided by them shall be refused by the secretary to be a voting or non-voting member with the blessing and on the authority of the Vicar.
- g. Any member who refuses to abide by these statutes and/or does not follow any more the Orthodox Christian Faith, or/and deliberately breaks the rules, regulations bye-laws of GOC, GOC DWE, GOC London Parish on the authority of the Vicar shall be removed from electoral role and membership list.
- h. The Secretary must remove the name of anybody who requests so from the membership list and/or electoral roll.
- i. The secretary must remove the name of anybody who dies.

Section 3

E l e c t i o n s of GOC London Parish Officers

- a. At the time of formal establishment of the parish the eligibility of candidates to become parish officers and their election is governed by article 1, section 4 of these Statutes.
- b. Any member of the GOC London Parish with voting rights is eligible to be elected as one of the parish officers.



- c. Eligible candidate must obtain blessing from the Vicar of the parish to stand for elections, be proposed by two voting members of the parish in accordance of these statutes and other agreed election procedures by GOC London Parish Council.

Section 4 C o u n c i l e l e c t i o n s

- a. At the time of formal establishment of the parish the eligibility of candidates and their election in GOC London Parish Council is governed by the article 1, section 4 of this Statutes.
- b. GOC London Parish Council members are as follows: The Vicar, all other clergy serving in the parish, all parish officers, the appointed choirmaster and an agreed number of other elected voting members.
- c. Any member of the GOC London parish with voting rights is eligible to be elected as a member of the council.
- d. Eligible candidate must obtain the blessing from the Vicar of the parish to stand for elections, be proposed by two voting members of the parish in accordance with these Statutes and other agreed procedures by GOC London Parish Council.
- e. A presiding Bishop of GOC DWE or/and a visiting vicar or priest, with the blessing of the presiding Bishop, may appoint additional members of the first provisional parish council with the formal agreement and approval of the majority of its members.

Section 5 E l e c t o r a l C o m m i t t e e a n d E l e c t i o n P r o c e d u r e s

- a. The formal electoral committee shall always supervise elections of parish officers and Parish Council except at the time of the formal establishment of the GOC London Parish.
- b. The head of election committee and its members are appointed by the council
- c. The Head and member of the electoral committee may be any voting or non-voting member, anybody from “Friends of GOC London Parish Group” or any other person whom the council wishes to appoint.



ARTICLE V
FRIENDS OF GOC LONDON PARISH GROUP

Section 1
M e m b e r s h i p l i s t

- a. Those eligible to become Members of the group are:
 - i. any Orthodox Christian who is a member of other Diocese and parish but wish to help GOC London Parish or participate in its life in any way which is not contradictory to this Statutes
 - ii. Those who are thinking and/or preparing themselves to become an Orthodox Christian and/or member of the GOC London Parish
 - iii. Those of any faith who are not thinking or preparing themselves to become Orthodox Christians and/or members of GOC London Parish but for different reason want to help the parish and would like to participate in its life in any way which is not contradictory to this Statutes
- b. GOC London Parish Council shall agree the application form for “Friends of GOC London Parish” and invite all eligible to become members of the group
- c. In accordance to article III section 5, IV of this Statutes group members are eligible to attend and speak at the parish meetings but do not hold the voting right
- d. The completion of the list is one of the duties of the GOC London Parish secretary
- e. The secretary of the parish removes names of those from the group list who:
 - f. die
 - g. whose activities are in contradiction with this statutes
 - h. who request so

Section 2
F r i e n d s o f G O C L o n d o n P a r i s h G r o u p A d v i s o r y C o m m i t t e e

- a. The group may establish an advisory committee.
- b. The Parish Vicar in agreement with parish council may ask any person to lead the advisory committee of the group.
- c. The leader of the Advisory Committee shall present a list of committee members to the Vicar for approval.



ARTICLE VI
BYE-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1
B y e – L a w s

The Parish General Meeting and the Parish Council shall have the power to enact bye-laws for the purpose of regulating the administration of parish activities, provided that these bye-laws are consistent with the Statutes as currently in effect. To be enacted such bye-laws shall require a simple majority of those present with voting rights.

Section 2
A m e n d m e n t s

- a. Any proposal for the amendment to the Statutes must be communicated to the Chairman of the Council and signed by two voting members of the parish within the time limit and the Council shall then place the proposal on its agenda and vote whether to put the proposal forward for the following general meeting of the GOC London Parish.
- b. If the amendment is passed by a majority of those present, the amendment is automatically placed at the top of the agenda for the following General Meeting of the GOC London Parish
- c. If General Meeting of the GOC London Parish votes by a two-thirds majority of those voting members who are present then the amendment is passed.