

The Constitution of the Association of British Professional Conference Organisers

1.		Name and legal status
		The Association of British Professional Conference Organisers Limited (ABPCO) was founded in 1981 and incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 1987.
2.		Objects
	2.1	The Association of British Professional Conference Organisers (ABPCO) is a dedicated industry association representing professional conference organisers and those in the industry who clearly demonstrate the skills, knowledge and experience required to plan and organise major UK and international conferences. Its mission is to develop and enhance the status of conference and event organisers and increase the recognition given to its members.
	2.2	Strategic Aims
		The Association's strategic aims are to uphold our values:
		Excellence – Enhance our members' status and recognition as professionals
		Learning – Raise standards of professionalism by offering engaging learning opportunities
		Belonging – Constantly develop and enhance the benefits we offer to our members
		Industry Voice – Increase the profile and recognition of the PCO community
	2.3	ABPCO wishes to ensure the UK meetings industry is able to compete on the world-stage through collaboration with other meeting industry organisations. To achieve this, we will: Seek and maintain strategic relationships with affiliate organisations that are committed to the promotion of business events, whether nationally or internationally.
3.		Membership
	3.1	<p>Membership is open to individual conference and event organisers who have an appropriate level of experience in running events, their industry colleagues, those pursuing a career in the meetings industry and associated industry support and supply service providers including DMOs.</p> <p>The Association has a number of key categories of membership: full, associate, entry, industry (including industry member and industry partner), academic student and academic department, allied and Honorary.</p> <p>Applicants accepted for full membership will have the following experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of four years' experience in the organisation of all services required for the preparation and running of conferences, seminars and/or other meetings and • A minimum of two years as a proprietor, partner, director or senior manager of a conference organising business or as the director or senior manager of a conference organising unit attached to a professional or trade association, educational institution, official body, or corporation. <p>Applicants accepted for associate membership will have the following experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of two years' experience in the organisation of all services required for the preparation and running of conferences, seminars and/or other meetings <p>Applicants accepted for industry membership will meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies who are conference and event industry supplier organisations, with proven experience working with association events including National Tourist Organisations, Destination Marketing Organisations, Convention Bureau, Purpose-built Convention Centres, Hotels and other venues and Industry suppliers. • The eligibility criteria (including capped numbers in this category) and packages are detailed on the web site. <p>Applicants accepted for entry level or academic student will meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a student either under and post graduate or be in the first 2 years of working in the industry. <p>Applicants accepted for Academic Department membership offer events management courses that have some focus on association conferences and related activities.</p>

		<p>Allied Membership – This category is by invitation only and is extended to self-employed individuals in a consultative role within the association meetings industry. Eligible candidates must be known to members of the accreditation committee or the executive but may not meet the entry requirements for other membership categories. Allied members will receive the same benefits as Associate members but will not have access to tenders.</p> <p>Honorary Membership will be agreed by the Executive and will be awarded to those who have made 'distinctive contributions' to the association.</p> <p>Further details of the eligibility criteria for membership are given on the ABPCO website. The ABPCO Association Director and the ABPCO accreditation committee shall review and make decisions on applications for membership.</p> <p>All members will be expected to adhere to a Code of Practice set out in full in the Association's 'Membership' Document and on the ABPCO website. Each year, in renewing their membership, all members will be required to reconfirm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their adherence to the code of practice • That they are actively involved in the association conference industry • That they are directly responsible themselves, or for others who are the key organisers of association events • That there have been no changes to the financial declarations made during the membership application • The details of the last event organised by themselves or their team.
	3.2	Resignations and Removals
		<p>Any member may resign by giving three months' notice in writing to the Executive Office. The accreditation committee will process any complaints against ABPCO members and subsequent removals from membership as per the 'Guide to complaints against ABPCO members' document. No refunds of membership fees will be made to anyone who resigns, or is removed, from membership part-way through a membership year.</p>
4.		Finance and Subscriptions
	4.1	<p>The Financial Year of the Association will run from 1st May until the 30th April. The membership year runs from 1st January to the 31st December.</p> <p>Each year the Association will consider a programme of work and proposals for the financing thereof (the 'Business Plan'), prepared for it by the Association Director and Executive Committee to cover the ensuing financial year.</p>
	4.2	<p>Payment of all member subscriptions shall be made within 30 days of the commencement of the Association's membership year or, in the case of new members joining during the year, within 30 days of the issuing of the Association's official invoice. Alternatively, payment can be made through a monthly standing order.</p>
	4.3	<p>A membership subscription is charged annually and is subject to VAT, with different scales for each membership category. Any increases to membership subscriptions will normally be based upon the average rise in the Retail Price Index for the 12-month period immediately prior to the setting of subscriptions for the ensuing financial membership year. Any other changes to membership subscriptions will need the approval of the full membership at either an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting</p>
	4.4	<p>Membership will lapse if member fees have not been paid within 60 days of the issuing of the annual membership invoice or within a month of the start of the membership year, as applicable, or if a standing order for monthly payment of fees has not been processed.</p>
5.		Representation and Voting
	5.1	<p>All members will have the right to attend the Annual General Meeting and any extraordinary General Meetings.</p>
	5.2	<p>No member shall be entitled to vote at any general meeting if they are in arrears with any monies owed to the association.</p>
	5.3	<p>Any objection to the qualification of any voter must be raised to the Association Director who will review with the Chair(s).</p>
	5.4	<p>All accredited and nominated members will have the right to vote at the AGM.</p>
6.		Executive Committee
	6.1	<p>The Executive Committee shall comprise the Chair(s), who will be full members, and up to five drawn from the full members (agency) and up to five full members (in-house), together with one member</p>

		drawn where possible from associate, university department and up to 4 drawn from the industry member categories. Members of the Executive Committee will be registered with Companies House as Directors of the company.
	6.2	Nominations for available places on the Executive Committee that arise each year shall be invited at least six weeks before the date of the Annual General Meeting
	6.3	Any individual voting member who is in good standing with their membership subscription is eligible to stand for election to the Executive Committee. It is preferable for a member to have been in membership of the Association for a minimum of 12 months.
	6.4	Executive Committee members are elected to serve for a three-year period. At the conclusion of this three-year term, members of the Executive Committee will have the opportunity either to elect replacements or to renew the appointment of the retiring member(s) for a further period of one year with full voting rights.
	6.5	Other members wishing to stand for election to the Executive Committee should be nominated by one Full member and seconded by any other members. They will normally have attended at least one AGM before serving on the Committee.
	6.6	The Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt additional persons to serve as non-voting members of the Executive Committee ex officio from time to time if the Executive Committee determines in its sole discretion that the association's objects will thereby be furthered. Additional appointments to the Executive Committee must not exceed two in number at any one time and for such period as the Executive Committee may determine, typically for a period of one year, but not more than three years. Co-opted members of the Executive Committee will not be eligible to stand for Chair positions during their co-opted term.
	6.7	Biennial nominations for the positions of Joint-Chair will be sought from within the Executive Committee in the first instance. The Joint Chairs will be, where possible, one full in-house PCO member and one full agency PCO member. If nomination of Joint Chairs is not possible, a single Chair nomination will be made, and will be a full member either from in-house or agency PCO.
	6.8	All nominations will subsequently be voted on democratically by the relevant membership categories
	6.9	All members (full and associate) who are in good standing order with their membership subscription are eligible to vote for all member places on the Executive Committee. Other members are eligible to vote for the representative from their membership category. All members and nominated representatives are eligible to vote for the Chair(s). In the event of there being more nominations than places available, an online ballot will be conducted before the AGM takes place. In the event of a tie, the Executive Committee (excluding those who are in the ballot) will be asked to take part in a deciding ballot. In the further event of a tie then the Chairs(s) and Treasurer will have the deciding vote.
	6.10	The Association Director is appointed by the Executive Committee. The day-to-day management of the Association shall be carried out by the Association Director, reporting to the Association's Chair(s).
	6.11	The Executive Committee shall be responsible to the members for its actions
	6.12	The Executive Committee shall be responsible, in conjunction with the Association Director, for the general running of the Association, handling membership applications, business development strategy, finance, information services, and the preparation of policy for discussion by members. The Association Director, ABPCO Chair(s) and members of the Executive Committee will also represent the interests of the Association to all appropriate Government agencies, industry bodies, and the media.
	6.13	The Executive Committee will meet in-person once a year, typically in May, to discuss the strategy for the forthcoming year and develop the business plan as defined in 4.1. Additional meetings will be arranged at the discretion of the Chair(s) and the Association Director. A monthly virtual Executive Committee meeting will be organised by the Association Director.
	6.14	The quorum for meetings of the Executive Committee is four voting Executive Committee members.
	6.15	Decisions can be taken outside of the Executive Committee meetings by use of legally accepted email or minuted in the monthly virtual meetings.
7.		Meetings

	7.1	There will be an Annual General Meeting to be held once per calendar year of which at least 21 days' notice shall be given in writing. The AGM will be held in principle face to face, however such meeting shall be held virtually and/or mixture of the two to be agreed by the Executive.
	7.2	The following documents shall be available on the website, and circulated on request to members, in advance of the meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Agenda for the Annual General Meeting and the Minutes of the previous AGM • Audited accounts
	7.3	At the Annual General Meeting the following items shall be presented for approval: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Minutes of the Previous Annual General Meeting 2) The Annual report of the Chair/Joint Chairs and Association Director 3) The audited accounts 4) Appointment of auditors 5) The Chair(s) and Executive Committee shall be appointed as appropriate (see paragraphs 7.2-7.4) 6) Such other business as determined by the Executive Committee or notified in writing by any member of the Executive Office at least 21 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting
	7.4	Other Extraordinary General Meetings shall be called by the Chair(s) upon receipt of a written request signed by four or more members of the Association
	7.5	A quorum for any Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting shall be at least 7 full members in addition to the Chair(s). In the event of a tie in votes on any subject, the Chair(s) of the meeting shall have a casting vote.
	7.6	Where a vote is required on any item, motions will only be passed provided that the majority of those voting are full members,
8.		Alterations to the Constitution
	8.1	Any proposals to alter the Constitution shall be considered by the Executive Committee and then submitted to the Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting for approval. In either case 21 days' notice of such an item on the Agenda for a General Meeting shall be given to members, specifying in writing the proposed alteration(s). Only members who have paid their subscriptions may vote on such proposals and a two-thirds majority of such members present and voting is necessary for the amendment to be implemented.
Revisions		REVISED June 2025 <i>Previously revised June 2023, May 2020, January 2017 (incorporating revisions approved in August 2014, July 2006, June 2007, June 2009, June 2010, June 2011, October 2012)</i> Agreed in 2020 that the constitution be reviewed biennially at the mid-term point of the Chair(s) tenure commencing with the first review in May 2021.