THE BOOK OF LIFE

Membership and Registration Authority

Institutional Structure, Powers, Responsibilities and Operating Procedures

Proposed Constitutional Institution

Independent of UKMS

Constitutional status: Proposed internal governing institution of the Book of Life.

Institutional purpose: To administer membership applications, conduct eligibility assessments, oversee criminal-record screening, approve registrations, maintain the Book of Life Register and protect the integrity and safety of the community.

PART I — ESTABLISHMENT AND MANDATE

Article 1 — Establishment

1. There shall be established an institution known as the **Book of Life Membership and Registration Authority (MRA)**.
2. The Authority shall be responsible for administering and maintaining the Book of Life Register.
3. It shall operate in accordance with:
   - The Book of Life Declaration.
   - The Book of Life Membership Charter.
   - The Book of Life Member's Pledge.
   - The Book of Life Safeguarding Policy.
   - Applicable laws and data-protection requirements.
4. The Authority shall operate independently of the United Kingdom Moneyless Society, political parties, religious organisations and other external institutions.
5. Its decisions shall be guided by fairness, consistency, confidentiality, safeguarding and the Five Core Values.

Article 2 — Primary Responsibilities

The Authority shall have responsibility for:

1. Receiving and processing membership applications.
2. Verifying applicant information.
3. Arranging appropriate criminal-record screening.
4. Conducting or arranging membership interviews.

5. Assessing applicants against the membership criteria.
6. Approving or refusing applications.
7. Formally registering accepted members.
8. Maintaining accurate and confidential membership records.
9. Monitoring compliance with membership requirements.
10. Investigating alleged breaches of the Membership Charter.
11. Administering membership suspensions and removals.
12. Providing an independent appeals process.
13. Ensuring that members are treated fairly and respectfully.

Article 3 — Limits of Authority

The Membership and Registration Authority shall not:

- Claim that its DBS screening provides a guarantee that an individual is safe or trustworthy.
- Exercise police, judicial or statutory law-enforcement powers.
- Declare an individual guilty of a criminal offence.
- Impose punishments outside the scope of Book of Life membership.
- Publicly disclose an individual's criminal-record information.
- Require membership as a condition of accessing ordinary public services or fundamental rights.
- Use membership decisions to discriminate unlawfully.
- Alter the Five Core Values without following the constitutional amendment procedure.

The Authority's powers shall relate exclusively to the administration and protection of the Book of Life community.

PART II — ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

A structure with five principal departments and an independent appeals function.

Article 4 — Institutional Organisation

MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE BODY

Director of Membership and Registration

Overall administrative leadership and accountability

Department	Primary Function
1. Applications and Registration	Applications, identity verification and membership records
2. Screening and Safeguarding	DBS procedures, risk assessment and safeguarding
3. Interviews and Assessment	Interviews and assessment of shared values
4. Membership Standards	Complaints, misconduct and disciplinary decisions
5. Records, Privacy and Administration	Confidentiality, information security, retention and administration

Independent Appeals Panel

Reviews refusals, suspensions, removals and procedural complaints independently of the original decision-makers. The Appeals Panel is institutionally separate from the Authority's operational departments.

Article 5 — Office of the Director

The Director shall be the principal administrative officer of the Authority.

Responsibilities:

1. Direct the day-to-day operations of the Authority.
2. Coordinate the five departments.
3. Ensure that membership applications are processed consistently.
4. Allocate responsibilities to departmental officers.
5. Ensure that decisions are supported by documented assessments.
6. Oversee institutional performance.
7. Prepare periodic reports on membership applications, registrations, refusals and safeguarding matters.
8. Ensure compliance with the Book of Life Constitution.

The Director shall not have unrestricted personal authority to approve, suspend or remove members without following the established procedures.

The Director may delegate administrative responsibilities but shall remain accountable for the proper operation of the Authority.

Article 6 — Department of Applications and Registration

This department shall be the first point of contact for prospective members. Its responsibilities shall include:

- Receiving membership applications.
- Confirming that applications are complete.
- Verifying identity through proportionate and lawful procedures.
- Explaining the membership requirements.
- Obtaining the applicant's informed agreement to screening.
- Recording application progress.
- Issuing membership decisions.

- Registering accepted applicants.
- Providing membership confirmation.

It shall maintain the official list of active registered members.

Article 7 — Department of Screening and Safeguarding

This department shall oversee the screening and safeguarding procedures.

1. Explaining the relevant DBS requirements.
2. Arranging eligible criminal-record checks through the appropriate channels.
3. Receiving and handling screening information securely.
4. Identifying relevant safeguarding concerns.
5. Assessing potential risks to members and participants.
6. Recommending appropriate protective measures.
7. Referring serious concerns to the appropriate external authorities where legally required or otherwise justified.

The department shall distinguish between a criminal conviction, an allegation, an unproven suspicion and a safeguarding concern. It shall not assume that every criminal conviction makes an applicant unsuitable.

DBS limitation: The Authority must use the level of DBS check legally available for the particular circumstances. Membership alone does not establish eligibility for Standard or Enhanced DBS checks. Where a Basic check is used, the Authority must understand that it covers unspent convictions and conditional cautions, not an individual's complete criminal history.

Article 8 — Department of Interviews and Assessment

This department shall assess applicants' understanding of and alignment with the Book of Life's worldview.

- Arranging applicant interviews.
- Explaining the Five Core Values.

- Assessing whether applicants understand the Member's Pledge.
- Identifying misunderstandings about the purpose of the organisation.
- Assessing willingness to participate positively in the community.
- Preparing written interview assessments.
- Making membership recommendations.

Interviews should assess genuine understanding and commitment rather than demand identical opinions on every social, political, religious or philosophical question.

Article 9 — Department of Membership Standards

This department shall oversee compliance with the Membership Charter.

1. Receiving complaints about member conduct.
2. Assessing alleged breaches of the Member's Pledge.
3. Coordinating internal investigations.
4. Gathering relevant evidence.
5. Providing members with opportunities to respond.
6. Recommending proportionate disciplinary measures.
7. Reviewing continuing membership concerns.
8. Maintaining records of disciplinary outcomes.

Where serious misconduct is alleged, the department may recommend precautionary suspension while an investigation takes place. The department shall not automatically assume guilt based on an allegation.

Article 10 — Department of Records, Privacy and Administration

This department shall protect the integrity and confidentiality of the Book of Life Register.

- Maintaining the official membership database.
- Recording registration dates and membership status.

- Maintaining signed Member's Pledges.
- Recording membership decisions.
- Restricting access to confidential information.
- Maintaining secure records of screening decisions.
- Processing resignations and membership removals.
- Managing data-retention and deletion schedules.
- Responding to appropriate requests concerning members' personal information.

Criminal-record information shall be held separately from the ordinary membership register wherever practicable, with access restricted to authorised personnel.

PART III — INDEPENDENT DECISION-MAKING

Article 11 — Membership Assessment Committee

A Membership Assessment Committee within the Authority makes collective membership decisions.

Position	Responsibility
Committee Chair	Leads membership decision meetings
Registration Officer	Presents the application
Safeguarding Officer	Presents relevant screening and risk considerations
Interview Assessor	Presents the interview assessment
Independent Member Representative	Provides an additional fairness perspective

The committee should normally have five voting members. The safeguarding officer should present relevant information without unnecessarily disclosing sensitive criminal-record details to individuals who do not need access.

Article 12 — Decision-making procedure

1. The committee shall consider each application individually.
2. Members shall declare conflicts of interest.
3. Decisions shall be made by a majority of those eligible to vote.
4. A quorum of three members shall be required, including an officer responsible for registration and an officer competent in safeguarding.
5. The committee shall record its reasons for accepting or refusing an application.
6. An applicant shall be informed of the decision in writing.

Article 13 — Membership decisions

The committee may issue one of four decisions:

Decision	Meaning	Description
Accepted	Approved for registration	The applicant has satisfied the membership requirements and may be entered into the Register.
Pending	Further assessment required	Additional information, clarification, screening or an interview is required.
Refused	Application declined	The committee has determined that the applicant does not satisfy the membership requirements or presents an evidenced and relevant safeguarding concern.
Withdrawn	Application discontinued	The applicant has voluntarily withdrawn their application.

A refusal shall not be treated as a declaration that the individual is a bad person. It is a decision about eligibility for membership.

PART IV — THE INDEPENDENT APPEALS PANEL

Article 14 — Establishment

An Independent Appeals Panel shall be established to ensure that membership decisions are fair, impartial and consistent with the Membership Charter.

Article 15 — Composition

The Panel shall consist of three appointed individuals:

1. **Appeals Chair:** Responsible for leading the appeal hearing and ensuring procedural fairness.
2. **Independent Panel Member:** Responsible for reviewing the evidence and original decision.
3. **Membership Rights Representative:** Responsible for ensuring that the applicant or member has been treated fairly.

No individual involved in the original decision shall participate in deciding the appeal.

Article 16 — Jurisdiction

The Panel shall hear appeals concerning membership refusal, suspension, termination, procedural unfairness, or disputes concerning eligibility.

Article 17 — Appeals Procedure

1. 28 days to submit an appeal.
2. Appeal must identify the decision and grounds.
3. The Panel obtains records and hears the appellant.
4. The Panel reaches an independent conclusion.

The Panel may uphold, overturn, refer back for reconsideration, or require new assessment.

PART V — MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION AND STATUS MANAGEMENT

Article 18 — Official Membership Register

The Authority shall maintain a central confidential database known as the **Book of Life Register**.

Register field	Purpose
Registration number	Unique membership reference
Full legal name	Identification
Preferred name	Everyday communication
Registration date	Date membership commenced
Membership status	Active, suspended, resigned or terminated
Pledge confirmation	Record of acceptance
Contact details	Membership communications
Review date	Administrative review where appropriate

Article 19 — Membership Status Categories

Status	Meaning

Applicant	Application received
Under Assessment	Screening or assessment underway
Active Member	Fully accepted and registered
Temporarily Suspended	Membership privileges temporarily restricted
Resigned	Member has voluntarily left
Terminated	Membership has been formally ended

Article 20 — Membership Identification

Each member may be issued a Book of Life Membership Certificate or membership card. It shall not display criminal-record information or be represented as a government-issued identity document.

PART VI — APPOINTMENTS, ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT

Article 21 — Appointment of Officers

Appointments based on integrity, experience, and commitment to the Five Core Values. Officers receive confidentiality and safeguarding training.

Article 22 — Terms of Office

Position	Proposed term
Director	3 years
Department Heads	3 years
Assessment Committee Members	2 years

Appeals Panel Members	2 years

Article 23 — Conflicts of Interest

Officers shall disclose interests and recuse themselves where impartiality could be compromised.

Article 24 — Accountability

The Authority shall publish an annual institutional report containing aggregate data on applications, registrations, and appeals.

Article 25 — Independent Review

Procedures should be periodically reviewed to ensure consistency, lawfulness, and protection of rights.

PART VII — STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Article 26 — The Complete Membership Journey

1. Application received

Applicant submits details and agrees to process.

2. Initial verification

Identity and eligibility checked.

3. DBS screening

Criminal-record screening arranged and assessed.

4. Interview

Understanding of worldview assessed.

5. Committee assessment

Evidence considered collectively.

6. Decision issued

Acceptance, refusal or pending.

7. Member's Pledge signed

Formal voluntary commitment confirmed.

8. Entry into the Book of Life

Member receives registration number.

ACTIVE BOOK OF LIFE MEMBER

Article 27 — Internal Service Standards

Activity	Proposed target
Acknowledge application	5 working days
Initial application review	10 working days
Arrange interview, if required	15 working days
Notify applicant of decision	10 working days after assessment
Acknowledge appeal	5 working days
Target appeal determination	28 days

PART VIII — IMPLEMENTATION

Article 28 — Establishing the Authority

Phase 1: Founding Administration (Director appointment, policy adoption).
Phase 2: Operational Readiness (Officer appointment, training, database).
Phase 3: Official Registration (Opening applications, issuing certificates).

Article 29 — Constitutional Safeguard

The Authority remains subordinate to founding principles. It exists to protect, not control. No officer shall use their position to pursue personal grievances.

FINAL INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT

Institution	Principal function
Book of Life	The independent community and philosophical identity
Founding Declaration	Defines the purpose and worldview
Membership Charter	Establishes membership rights, conditions and procedures
Member's Pledge	Records each member's voluntary commitment
Membership and Registration Authority	Administers membership and the Register
Membership Assessment Committee	Makes collective membership decisions
Independent Appeals Panel	Reviews contested decisions

Book of Life Register	Official record of accepted members