

# Shire of Owlsherst Customal

## **Statement of Purpose**

These are the customs and procedures for conducting the business of the Shire of Owlsherst. This is an unofficial publication of the Shire of Owlsherst of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. It is not a corporate publication of the SCA, Inc., and does not delineate SCA policies. Moreover, in any case where these guidelines and policies conflict with East Kingdom Law or with Corpora, those higher laws take precedence.

## **Membership**

For shire business only, anyone residing within the boundaries of Owlsherst as defined by the East Kingdom Zip Code List as maintained by the East Kingdom Seneschal is considered a member of the shire and may vote in Shire elections and on proposals.

Non-residents who request "honorary member" status and who participate in the shire and are acceptable to a majority of the voting populace at the meeting may be granted that status. There will be a one month consideration period between the request and the vote. Once granted "Honorary Member" status, a non-resident may also vote in shire elections and on proposals and be eligible to election to an office according to Kingdom Law and Corpora. In order to vote, members and honorary members must be present at the meeting at which the vote is taking place.

## **Officers**

Officers are strongly encouraged to attend a majority of shire meetings and to attend any officers' meetings held. If an officer cannot attend a meeting, he or she is required to contact the Seneschal with a report, and to ensure that the duties of the office are still fulfilled. Officers are required to provide contact information to the members of the shire.

Officers are required to ensure that the duties of their office are carried out at any shire event or demo. They are strongly encouraged to attend the event so that they can fulfill their duties themselves, but if the officer cannot attend personally, it is their responsibility to appoint other qualified persons to do so.

Any problem with an officer's performance that cannot be dealt with on a local level will be handled in accordance with Kingdom law.

New offices can be created by the vote of the shire and added as meets the needs of the shire.

## **Election of Officers**

Elections will be held each year in May for these offices as designated:

<u>In odd-numbered years:</u>	<u>In even-numbered years:</u>
Chancellor Minor	Chamberlain
Chronicler	Chatelaine
Company Captain of Archers	E-list Minister
Exchequer*	Minister of Arts & Sciences
Herald*	Minister of Lists
Knight Marshal	Seneschal*
Youth Marshal	Web Minister

\* Offices required by Kingdom Law

Nominations will begin in April. Anyone at the shire meeting may nominate someone; the nominee must accept, either in person or in writing, in order to be put on the slate. Candidates must meet the requirements as set by East Kingdom and Society Law and Policy. The Seneschal and Exchequer may not be related nor reside in the same household.

The office is awarded to the candidate who receives the highest number of votes. In the case of offices which require warranting by a Kingdom level officer, that candidate is submitted to the Kingdom level officer for approval.

Terms of office normally run for two years as shown above. In the event that an officer is unable to finish their term of office, their replacement must be elected as soon as is feasible, with a nomination at one shire meeting, and election held the following month. In an emergency where a replacement officer is required before the above procedures can be followed, the Shire Seneschal can appoint a Temporary Officer to perform the duties as needed until nominations and elections can be held. In the event that a replacement Seneschal is needed, a meeting of no fewer than three Officers of the Shire can appoint a temporary Seneschal, until full nominations and elections can be held.

## **Events**

A shire event is an official SCA event, listed on the Kingdom Event Calendar, sponsored, staffed, and funded by Owlsherst. Since any event in the shire reflects on the shire, bids are required four months prior to the event to ensure that an event has the support of a majority of the shire's members and time is adequate to prepare.

Bids presented to the shire should propose in accordance with Kingdom Law:

- Event Steward
- Head Cook
- preferred date and site
- alternate dates or sites
- proposed budget with:
  - estimated attendance
  - estimated income
  - estimated expenses
  - planned charges for all attendees
  - theme and activities

If the proposed event includes food, Event Steward should be in communication with the Shire of Owlsherst Cook's Guild prior to presenting the event bid to the shire. It is strongly recommended that any proposed Head Cook be a member of the Owlsherst Cook's Guild, or be acceptable to the Cook's Guild, as they will be working in close conjunction with them.

Event bids are subject to discussion and revision by the voting populace at the shire meeting. The proposal must be approved by the Shire Finance Committee.

The Event Steward will be a temporary shire officer from the date of event approval until the final reports are submitted. The duties will include monthly progress reports to the shire and acting in good faith as the official representative for the shire. Also, the Event Steward is responsible for handling monies as defined in the Shire Financial Policy.

Anyone who plans or desires to be an Event Steward for an Owlsherst event should familiarize themselves with the duties and information listed in the Owlsherst Steward's Handbook. It is strongly recommended that any proposed Event Steward have served as a deputy Event Steward for at least one prior event.

## **Demos**

The shire will have one person who coordinates demonstrations. The Demo Coordinator will be an appointed deputy for the Seneschal or Chatelaine. The Demo Coordinator will keep that position for a full term of office of 2 years. As the Shire's representative to the public, the Demo Coordinator must handle communications with the mundane contact in a prompt, efficient, and professional manner.

Any shire member contacted for a demo must obtain from the requestor their contact information, expectations and proposed dates, and convey said information to the Demo Coordinator. Any request for a

demo must be presented to the shire for consideration at the next business meeting. At least two months' notice is needed to ensure a quality demo and the backing of the shire.

Expenditures for demos will be handled in accordance with proposals and acquisitions as outlined in shire financial policy.

### **Digital Communications Policy**

The Yahoo email list group is to be considered the official method of digital communication for the Shire. In the event that a contradiction exists between the email list, shire website, kingdom website, and/or Facebook (or other social media outlets), contradictions should be resolved using the following order: East Kingdom Website > Yahoo Email List> Owlsherst Website > Facebook (or other social media).

### **Shire Financial Policy**

#### **Finance Committee**

The Shire Finance Committee shall consist of the Shire Seneschal, Exchequer, and any paid members attending the meeting. Finance Committee meetings may be simply held during the regular monthly shire meeting, or they may be held as special meetings advertised in either the shire newsletter or electronic list with at least two weeks' notice.

#### **Disbursements and Reimbursements**

Anyone who is physically handling Shire money, whether it is the Exchequer, Reservations Clerk, Event Steward, officer, etc., is responsible for the money in their charge. They will be held accountable for any shortages or losses due to negligence or misuse and will be expected to reimburse the Shire appropriately.

In the case of disbursement of money, a signed cash advance form will be required from the recipient prior to disbursement. The recipient must provide receipts and/or repayment to cover the total amount disbursed, either within 30 days of expenditure or not later than 15 days after the event.

The exchequer's office requires a receipt for event site fee, services or products, or a copy of the signed contract for said items, in order for monies to be disbursed or reimbursed. To ease in record-keeping, anyone handling a cash advance for event expenditures will be given an envelope with a Reconciliation form. Money spent should be written on the form and any receipts placed inside.

Officers or shire members receiving a check from the shire for any reason are responsible for cashing or depositing that check in a timely manner within 30 days, to facilitate bookkeeping. Should the recipient lose the check or otherwise make it necessary to request a stop payment, per East Kingdom law, they are responsible for that stop payment fee.

Shire officers are allotted up to \$20 a year for postage and photocopying for the purposes of their office. They must submit receipts within 2 months of expenditure or by the end of the year, whichever is soonest, should they wish to be reimbursed from Shire funds.

Any officer's expenditure over \$20 should be pre-approved by the shire at a business meeting. An unplanned expenditure over \$20 for any reason may be submitted at the next shire meeting, but there is no guarantee of approval for reimbursement.

#### **Shire Acquisitions**

Any expenditure for Shire Chattels of any kind should be pre-approved by a majority vote of the Finance Committee. A proposal with options and estimates for cost and maintenance should be presented for vote by the Finance Committee. The person authorized to make the approved purchase may not exceed the pre-approved estimate by more than 10 percent without informing the shire and again gaining approval.

The approved money may be released prior to purchase, or as a post-purchase reimbursement, per the approval of the Finance Committee. Upon purchase, all receipts must be given to the Exchequer within 30 days of expenditure. If the monies dispensed exceed the actual expense, the excess monies must be returned to the Exchequer within 30 days along with the Reconciliation Form.

Any physical items bought with Shire funds are Shire property and should be treated as delineated in the Shire Property section of these guidelines.

### **Shire Property**

The Chamberlain shall be responsible for keeping track of all Shire Property, also referred to here as chattels. Shire chattels include but are not necessarily limited to supplies such as toilet paper and garbage bags, cooking equipment, pavilions and group camping equipment, craft supplies, books, and medical supplies and equipment. The chattels do not include food items left over from Shire events.

The Chamberlain will maintain a detailed inventory with quantities and locations of all items. An inventory review should take place annually. A copy of the inventory shall be held by the Exchequer. Additional inventory reviews may be encouraged after events or other significant use of shire chattels.

Anyone storing Shire chattels is holding them in the Shire's name and should relinquish them when no longer an active member of the shire. They are responsible for storing the chattels safely and accessibly.

Additionally, those holding Shire chattels may not make personal use of the chattels without requesting prior approval from the shire.

Any physical items bought with Shire funds for the purpose of an office are Shire property and should be inventoried as such. When an officer leaves that office, all items go to their replacement or to the Chamberlain.

Any chattels that are damaged, lost, etc., should be reported to the Chamberlain and the Seneschal. Anyone in possession of chattels is responsible for damage or loss due to negligence or misuse and will be expected to reimburse the shire appropriately.

### **Event money**

The initial event proposal, or event bid, should include itemized estimates for the various expenditures expected. These may include categories listed on the East Kingdom event reporting form, and are subject to the approval of the Shire Finance Committee.

The Event Steward shall require all deputies and aides to request approval for any increase in the monies allotted to them.

The Event Steward should try to stay within their proposed budget and should keep a running tab of expenditures to aid in doing so. The Autocrat should report at each business meeting on the current status of the event including expenditures.

Any Event Steward who is irresponsible with the Shire's money may be prohibited from autocratting shire events in the future.

The Event Steward and the Head Cook may, if they wish, attend the event they are in charge of for free. Cooking staff who plan to spend the feast in the kitchen may pay the off board price.

The Reservations Clerk, Event Steward, and any volunteers at gate before, during, and after an event shall handle all monies received in a responsible fashion in accordance with procedures as outlined in the Owlsherst Autocrat's Handbook.

### **Event Refund Policy**

All refunds must be requested of the Event's Reservation Clerk, and will be issued by a check from the Shire.

The Reservation Clerk must receive all event fee refund requests in writing or by email, no later than 7 days after the opening of the event.

No refunds shall be provided if the event does not make a profit, except in cases of hardship or at the discretion of the Event Steward.

**Customal Review and Revision**

These guidelines will be reviewed by the shire every four years to ensure that they still reflect the practice and intent of the shire. A review will consist of distributing a copy of these guidelines at the shire business meeting and inviting commentary from the populace for the following meeting. Any changes must be decided by a majority vote of the Shire members present at that meeting.