

# 1.0 Handbook

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This handbook is intended for general use and reference by all members of the **Dark Ages Society**. It explains the aims, structure and governance of the Society as well as the standards which members are expected to uphold.

## 1.1 Aims of the Society

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The primary aims of the Dark Ages Society are:<sup>1</sup>

1. To re-create as closely as possible the life-style, thoughts and comradeship of the period of ninth century history, during the Viking invasions of Saxon England, by making and using accurately produced (or looking) articles of clothing, weaponry and every-day artifacts; and by re-enacting the *battles, banquets and home life* of the relevant cultures known to exist in our lands in the period A.D. 850-890, (with particular attention to the actual events during the decade (870-879)<sup>2</sup>.
2. To create a Society that will bring together people with a genuine interest in history (whether they be active members or not), in order that both we and the public can come to a closer understanding of a very formative period of British History.

This aim may be achieved more successfully by means of authorised public displays, educational displays and talks, and discussion groups.

3. To create a Society that is unique, in that it is run upon a friendly basis in which all members may take an active part.

Fighting is only an element in the make-up of the Society. Non-Combatant roles **must not** be treated with disregard.

To avoid an over-competitive and aggressive Society, role-playing is encouraged amongst **all** members.<sup>3</sup>

**Note:** It should be noted that the **Dark Ages Society** is not an organisation formed for individual monetary gain, or indeed a group formed for the purpose of making profit from our members' expertise.

All money earned or taken by subscriptions is used purely to further the aims as stated above. The use of such funds is to be decided upon by the majority of Full Members, by vote, in conjunction with a motion being passed by the majority of the ruling officers in council.

It is the responsibility of each **individual** member of the Society to interpret these aims as best as they can, using the guidance of the Rules and experienced members.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As Defined in addendum to Officers' Meeting 02/06/84

<sup>2</sup> The specific relationship between the current date with the equivalent date in the 870's (ie. January 1991 would be January 871) was removed at the Officers' Meeting 16/02/91.

<sup>3</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/02/90

<sup>4</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/02/90

## 1.2 Administration

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### 1.2.1 Administrative Structure

The Society shall consist of:

1. The Honorary President
2. Elected Officers (elected for a 2 year term of Office<sup>5</sup>)
  - a. Chair
  - b. Secretary
  - c. Treasurer
  - d. Safety Officer
  - e. Women's Representative<sup>6</sup>
  - f. New Members' Representative
3. Unit Officers, being those members who at present lead Units.
4. Full Members<sup>7</sup> (including Training Officers).

Full members are persons who have completed their probationary year and have been accepted into the Society by vote of the Council, and have paid their yearly subscription. Each Full Member has one vote on the general Society decisions, i.e. annual elections, motions proposed by the Council etc..

5. Probationary Members<sup>8</sup>

Probationary members are persons who have not completed their probationary period and have not yet been voted Full Membership by the Council.

Probationary members are expected to pay their year's subscription once they have decided to join and accept in full the aims and rules of the Dark Ages Society.

6. Child Members<sup>9</sup>

Child members are persons under 18 years of age who are children of a Full or Provisional Member.

On reaching the age of 18 years, the child may join as a Probationary Member.

### 1.2.2 The Officers' Meeting

#### 1.2.2.1 Role of the Council

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<sup>5</sup> Officers' Meeting 04/06/83

<sup>6</sup> As amended at Women's Meeting 01/04/89

<sup>7</sup> Officers' Meeting 02/06/84

<sup>8</sup> Officers' Meeting 02/06/84

<sup>9</sup> Officers' Meeting 05/11/2011

The role of the Officers' Meeting should, in the main, be of an advisory nature, proposing new ideas for changes or additions to the Society and putting any individual idea to all Dark Ages Society members.

There are certain matters which the Officers' Meeting will be responsible for by itself, without putting a proposal before the whole Membership (Unit Officers must consult their own Unit's men and women on these occasions). These decisions will concern the voting of Full Membership for prospective members and also voting for any cautionary or disciplinary action to be taken against members for specific reasons.<sup>10</sup>

However, it is accepted practice that the Officers' Meeting will represent the Membership in a decision making capacity. Therefore the Officers' Meeting forms the basic decision making body of the Dark Ages Society. In its decision making role the Officers Meeting will **always** be subject to the superior authority of a full Society vote (see 1.2.3.3, "Other Decision making processes").

The Officers' Meeting shall consist of<sup>11</sup>

#### 1. Elected Officers

Elected Officers are Society Members elected by the Full Membership, for a two year term, to fill specific duties in the administration of the Society.

The following Officers are Elected Officers of the Society

- Chair
- Safety Officer
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Women's Representative
- New Members' Representative

#### 2. Unit Officers

##### 1.2.2.2 Election Of Council Officers

1. Any candidate, nominator and seconder must be a Full Member.<sup>12</sup>
2. All Elected Officers are elected for a two year term.
3. No person shall hold more than one elected post at any one time.<sup>13</sup>

**Note:** There is no specific exclusion of Unit Officers from Elected posts. However, it is generally accepted that they should not stand.

4. Elections for Chair, Secretary and New Members' Representative<sup>14</sup> will be held at the first full Society Event of every "even" year.
5. Elections for the Safety Officer, Treasurer and Women's Representative will be held at the first full Society Event of every "odd" year.

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<sup>10</sup> Officers' Meeting 02/06/84

<sup>11</sup> The post of Honorary President as a constituent of an Officers' Meeting was removed as of Officers' Meeting 17/10/92 agenda item 8e.

<sup>12</sup> Officers' Meeting 04/02/06

<sup>13</sup> Officers' Meeting 27/10/84

<sup>14</sup> Officers' Meeting 20/10/01

6. Nominations for Election should be sent to the Secretary by year-end of the previous year.<sup>15</sup>
7. Nominations should be in the following format:<sup>16</sup>

|                       |  |                  |  |
|-----------------------|--|------------------|--|
| <b>Nominee:</b>       |  | <b>Post:</b>     |  |
| <b>Nominator</b><br>: |  | <b>Secunder:</b> |  |

8. "Those who cannot attend"...the Election... "should notify the Secretary for a voting slip."<sup>17</sup>
9. Postal votes will only be valid if received by the Secretary on, or before, the Wednesday immediately preceding the election.
10. Voting will be by paper ballot<sup>18</sup>
11. "Anyone may vote"...at a Society election... "who has previously been a member of the Dark Ages Society and has renewed their subscription for the current year."<sup>19</sup>
12. The Returning Officer will be the Secretary (see 1.2.4.3, "Secretary"), or the nominee of an ad hoc Officers' Meeting in the event of the Secretary's absence<sup>20</sup> or the Election of the Secretary<sup>21</sup>.
13. Candidates should not see voting slips<sup>22</sup>.
14. If there is more than one nominee for a post an election will be held at the first full Society Event of the year<sup>23</sup>.
15. In the event of no candidate standing for a post the incumbent Officer will be asked to continue until a replacement can be found. The Incumbent Officer is **not** required to accept the continuation.

If the Officer accepts, the Membership should be informed at the first full Society Event (and /or via the Dark Ages Society magazine) that the incumbent Officer is continuing in Office. To overturn this position a Full Society vote must be called (See 1.2.3.3, "Other decision making processes").<sup>24</sup>

## 1.2.3 Decision Making

### 1.2.3.1 Full Officers' Meeting

The Primary decision making body of the Dark Ages Society is the Officers' Meeting , which meets twice a year.

**1.2.3.1.1 Purpose of Officers' Meeting:** Officers' Meetings are a forum for any comments, grievances, suggestions or proposals which a Member of the Society wishes to discuss.

<sup>15</sup> Precedents set 21/11/86 and 10/10/87

<sup>16</sup> Officers' Meeting 21/11/86

<sup>17</sup> Officers' Meeting 21/11/86

<sup>18</sup> Officers' Meeting 10/10/87

<sup>19</sup> Officers' Meeting 10/10/87

<sup>20</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/10/92 Agenda Item 8f

<sup>21</sup> Implicit requirement. Not stated in Officers' Meeting amendment of 17/10/92 but required to comply with the requirement that Candidates do not see voting slips (Officers' Meeting 21/01/87)

<sup>22</sup> Officers' Meeting 21/01/87

<sup>23</sup> Officers' Meeting 16/02/91

<sup>24</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/02/90

Officers' Meetings should be held on the first Saturday of February and the third Saturday of October,<sup>25</sup> or the nearest convenient Saturday.

The format of the meeting will be decided by the Chair in the Agenda which they will draft, and distribute, two weeks prior to the Meeting.

All items for inclusion in the agenda should be sent to the Chair at least one month before the meeting (see 1.2.4.1, "Chair").

**1.2.3.1.2 Agenda for Officers' Meeting:** Typical elements in the Agenda may include the following items:

- Apologies for absence
- Matters Arising from previous Meeting
- Ratification of Prospective Members as Full Members of the Dark Ages Society
- Financial Review<sup>26</sup>
- Review of Safety<sup>27</sup>

This should include a review of:

- Accident Book
- Dangerous/Non-standard fighting Book<sup>28</sup>
- Report of Women's Rep
- Review List of Training Officers
- Review List of Sword Wearers and Users
- Specific Issue for debate<sup>29</sup>
- Future Events
- Next Meeting
- A.O.B.

**1.2.3.1.3 Attendance at Officers' Meetings:** All Society Officers are expected to attend (or send a representative in their place). A Unit Officer is expected to personally participate in at least one Officers' Meeting in three<sup>30</sup>.

If an Officer fails to appear at, or send a representative to, an Officers' Meeting a reminder letter will be sent. If they miss a third consecutive meeting and again fail to send a representative, a general reminder letter will be sent to the Officer and each member of the Unit. If no Officer or representative attends the fourth consecutive meeting, the Unit can be disbanded at the Officers' Meeting's discretion.<sup>31</sup>

Officers travelling to an Officers' Meeting may claim a travel allowance<sup>32</sup> (see 1.3.3, "Expenses" for conditions and sum allowed).

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<sup>25</sup> Officers' Meeting 21/02/04

<sup>26</sup> The Annual Financial Report should be prepared for presentation at the February meeting in the following Calendar year.

<sup>27</sup> This Report should be presented by **The Safety Officer** at the second Officers' Meeting of each year.

<sup>28</sup> See 1.2.4.2, "Safety Officer" and Officers' Meeting 17/02/90

<sup>29</sup> Issues for debate are all items which the Chair has been asked to include in the agenda by Members of the Dark Ages Society.

<sup>30</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/02/90, 02/02/13

<sup>31</sup> Officers' Meeting 27/10/84, 02/02/13

<sup>32</sup> Officers' Meeting 23/11/85

Any Member of the *Dark Ages Society* may attend as a non-voting observer. However they should check with the holder of the Meeting that there is sufficient space.

### 1.2.3.2 Women's Meetings

Women's Meetings can be held when required. They are intended to represent female members of the Dark Ages Society, and to "enable any ideas that arise to be, if necessary, at the Officers' Meeting"...by the Women's Representative (See 1.2.4.5, "Women's Representative").<sup>33</sup>

### 1.2.3.3 Other Decision making processes

Whilst the normal, and strongly recommended, path for the resolution of Members questions, proposals etc. is via their Unit leader it is acknowledged that other methods exist.

**1.2.3.3.1 Elected Officers:** If a Member feels they cannot raise an issue through their own Unit Officer, they may go directly to an Elected Officer (typically the Chair) to represent their views at an Officers' Meeting.

**1.2.3.3.2 Officers' Meeting:** A member may present their views to an Officers' Meeting directly, at the discretion of the Chair, however they do not have a vote.

**1.2.3.3.3 Full Society Vote:** If the above routes have been unsuccessful in resolving the issue, any Full Member of the Society may, with the support of 13 other full Society Members (i.e. 14 in total), propose a motion to be put to the whole Society for a decision. This decision will be by vote, with all Full Members of the Society having one vote each, regardless of rank.

## 1.2.4 Roles and Responsibilities

### 1.2.4.1. Chair

The duties of the Chair are:

1. Preside over Officers' Meetings and Full Society Meetings.
2. Ensure that all elements of the Society are guided to work for and towards the aims of the Society, and to encourage an active, vigorous and enthusiastic pursuit of authenticity, and to help all Members feel a part of a social, united and well informed group.<sup>34</sup>
3. To attend and chair Officers' Meeting and general Meetings, or propose a representative to take their place.
4. The Chair does not vote at Officers' Meeting, except as a casting vote.
5. To enforce *Dark Ages Society* policy and decisions within the membership, with the full backing of the other Officers.
6. To encourage a constant flow of information and ideas between the different geographic areas of membership, and thus avoid any alienation of members.
7. At all times to exert a guiding influence on the direction of the Society to follow the fundamental aims of *Dark ages Society*
8. Be an ambassador for the Society in the issue of authenticity, by setting a high standard themselves and encouraging it in others.

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<sup>33</sup> Officers' Meeting 18/02/12

<sup>34</sup> Officers' Meeting 08/83

9. The Chair should be respected individually by all members and be able to deal fairly and objectively as an arbitrator of differing viewpoints, ultimately working for the welfare of the Society as a whole.<sup>35</sup>
10. Prepare an agenda for Officers' Meeting, in consultation with the Membership (normally this will be via the Unit Officers), and distribute prior to the Meeting.<sup>36</sup> A provisional Agenda should be prepared for inclusion in the Dark Ages Society Magazine. Items for the second Officers' Meeting of each year in the mid-year Magazine and Items for the first Officers' Meeting in the end-of-year Magazine preceding the meeting.<sup>37</sup> (See the list of duties of 1.2.4.7.3, "Magazine Editor", 1.2.4.6, "Unit Officers" and 1.2.4.8, "All Members of the Dark Ages Society" for more detail).
11. Collect and keep aware of comments, grievances, and suggestions for review at Officers' Meetings.
12. Assist the Safety Officer in performing a Weapons Inspection at every Event.
13. Assist the Safety Officer in organising a Practice session at every Event.
14. Act as the deputy for any elected Officer in their absence at a weekend.<sup>38</sup>
15. Perform a Costume Inspection at Events. This should be carried out with the assistance of former Chairs of the Dark Ages Society and any co-opted Members that the Chair sees fit to enlist.<sup>39</sup>
16. The Chair is one of the "Senior Management" for insurance purposes and required to disclose details of any criminal charges and convictions to the society's insurer.

#### 1.2.4.2 Safety Officer

The duties of the Safety Officer are:<sup>40</sup>

1. To canvass and represent views on how to maintain and improve *safety* within *Dark Ages Society*.
2. To keep a record of **all** injuries at Society weekends, and how they occurred.
3. To maintain a record of any complaints about *non-standard* or dangerous fighting.<sup>41</sup>
4. To ensure each Unit is providing their own First Aid cover.
5. Maintain the Society First Aid Kits and ensure that each Unit has at least one each.<sup>42</sup>
6. To pass on current First Aid opinion to the Membership.
7. Perform a Weapons Inspection at the start of every Event, for Safety and adherence to the Weapon Guidelines.<sup>43</sup>
8. Inform the Owner, and the owners Unit Officer, of any weapon which fails to meet the Society Guidelines and is regarded as Non-standard.<sup>44</sup>
9. Maintain a register of *non-standard* weapons.<sup>45</sup>
10. To ban any weapon from the Unit of a combatant which they, in conjunction with the weapon owner's Unit Officer and one other officer, consider by a majority decision to be unsafe.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Officers' Meeting 28/10/84

<sup>36</sup> See 1.2.3.1, "Full Officers' Meeting" for more detail.

<sup>37</sup> Officers' Meeting 16/02/91

<sup>38</sup> Officers' Meeting 20/10/90

<sup>39</sup> Proposal for ratification at Officers' Meeting 19/10/91

<sup>40</sup> Officers Meeting 27/10/84

<sup>41</sup> Officers' Meeting 16/02/91

<sup>42</sup> Officers' Meeting 19/10/02

<sup>43</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/02/90

<sup>44</sup> Officers' Meeting 20/10/90

<sup>45</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/02/90

<sup>46</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/02/90

11. Organise a practice session before the start of every Event.
12. Hold a register of those trained in First Aid.<sup>47</sup>
13. The Safety Officer has one vote at Officers' Meetings.
14. The Safety Officer is one of the "Senior Management" for insurance purposes and required to disclose details of any criminal charges and convictions to the society's insurer.

### 1.2.4.3 Secretary

The duties of the Secretary are:<sup>48</sup>

1. To write, keep a record of and circulate the minutes of Officers' Meetings and General Meetings.
2. To collect and record Membership subscriptions, and pass on details of subscriptions and Membership details to the Treasurer.<sup>49</sup>
3. To keep an up-to-date Membership List, with Members' names, Society names and current addresses, which can be used as a mailing list.
4. To administer postal votes.
5. To act as Returning Officer at the election of Elected Society Officers (see 1.2.1., "Administrative Structure" for a list of Elected Officers and 1.2.2.2, "Election of Council Officers" for details of the Dark Ages Society election process).<sup>50</sup>
6. Co-ordinate the *Dark Ages Society* calendar<sup>51</sup>
7. Members send any relevant event dates that may cause disruption to a Dark Ages Society Weekend to the Secretary and at their discretion they list them on the Dark Ages Society Events Calendar.<sup>52</sup>
8. Remind the Event Organiser to advertise at least two months in advance.<sup>53</sup>
9. The Secretary has one vote at Officers' Meetings.<sup>54</sup>
10. The Secretary is one of the "Senior Management" for insurance purposes and required to disclose details of any criminal charges and convictions to the society's insurer.

### 1.2.4.4 Treasurer

The Treasurer must be elected, not simply nominated.<sup>55</sup>

The duties of the Treasurer are:

1. Assist the Secretary in the collection and recording of Membership subscriptions and details.<sup>56</sup>
2. Act in the Role of Secretary in the absence of this Officer at a weekend.<sup>57</sup>
3. Accept subscriptions and Membership details from the Secretary.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Officers' Meeting 02/02/85

<sup>48</sup> Officers' Meeting 27/10/84

<sup>49</sup> Officers' Meeting 20/10/90

<sup>50</sup> Implicit as of Officers' Meeting 17/10/92 Agenda Item 8f

<sup>51</sup> See 1.5, "Organisation of Events" for more detail on this subject.

<sup>52</sup> Officers' Meeting 16/10/04

<sup>53</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/10/98

<sup>54</sup> Officers' Meeting 27/10/84

<sup>55</sup> Officers' Meeting 20/10/90

<sup>56</sup> Officers' Meeting 20/10/90

<sup>57</sup> Officers' Meeting 20/10/90

<sup>58</sup> Officers' Meeting 20/10/90

4. To ensure that the Secretary and other Council Members have necessary funds to carry out official business
5. The Treasurer has one vote at Officers' Meetings.<sup>59</sup>
6. The Treasurer shall be responsible to the *Dark Ages Society* for all the monies part of the *Dark Ages Society* central fund and the return of, or satisfactory accounting for, all these monies at the completion of their term of office.<sup>60</sup>
7. The Treasurer is one of the "Senior Management" for insurance purposes and required to disclose details of any criminal charges and/or convictions to the society's insurer.

See 1.3, "Financial" for additional details of Dark Ages Society Fiscal rules and controls.

#### **1.2.4.5 Women's Representative**

The duties of the Women's Representative are:<sup>61</sup>

1. Represent the views of **all** female members of the *Dark Ages Society*, with particular emphasis on the *non-combatant* and *non-shield bearing* members (see 1.4.6.1, "Unit Organisation").
2. To introduce herself to all new Female Members as soon as possible at a Weekend. Unit Officers should try to inform her of new members in advance if possible.
3. Ensure that the Women's Group operates within the existing society structure, and does not become a separatist movement.
4. The Women's Representative has one vote at Officers' Meetings.<sup>62</sup>

#### **1.2.4.6 New Members Representative<sup>63</sup>**

The duties of the New Members' Representative are<sup>64</sup>:

1. To represent the views of all Probationary Members of the Dark Ages Society.
2. To contact all New Members as soon as possible and introduce themselves as soon as possible at a DAS Event. The Secretary and/or Unit Officer's should inform the New Members Representative of New Members at the earliest possible opportunity.
3. To ensure that Probationary Members are aware of and understand the Minimum Standards required for Full Membership.
4. To provide such encouragement, support and information to Members as may be necessary to help them develop their characters, kit and aspirations in line with the Rules and Aims of The Dark Ages Society.
5. The New Members Representative has one vote at Officers' Meetings.<sup>65</sup>

#### **1.2.4.7 Unit Officers**

Unit Officers are Full Members chosen by their Unit<sup>66</sup> for their personal merits and attitude to the Society. They are responsible for the conduct, attitude and equipment of the members of

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<sup>59</sup> Officers' Meeting 27/10/84

<sup>60</sup> Officers' Meeting 22/11/86

<sup>61</sup> Based on Minutes of Women's Meeting 01/04/89

<sup>62</sup> Officers' Meeting 03/02/07

<sup>63</sup> Officers' Meeting 20/10/01

<sup>64</sup> Officers' Meeting 04/02/06

<sup>65</sup> Officers' Meeting 20/10/01

<sup>66</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/10/92 Agenda Item 8h

their own Unit (on and off the battlefield), they also have a responsibility for the welfare and safety of the Society and all its members.<sup>67</sup>

A Unit Officer should be actively involved in the work of the Dark Ages Society and maintain their prestigious positions through their hard work for their Unit and the Society as a whole. Should their own personal circumstances alter outside the Society in such a way as to restrict what they are expected to do, they should always feel able to step down from this role.

The duties of Unit Officers are:

1. To be able to teach or provide the *fundamentals* of Dark Ages Society combat and be familiar with the nature of **all aspects** of combat in the Dark Ages Society.
2. To ensure that all members of their Unit are capable of fighting according to the Dark Ages Society rules.  
Officers should **not** feel obliged to teach aspects of combat (e.g. Sword) personally, but should pass trainees on to an appropriate Unit or Training Officer (see 1.2.4.8.2, "Training Officers") who can.<sup>68</sup>
3. To organise their Unit within the parameters of the Dark Ages Society Standards and personally set a high standard (with specific regard to Safety and discipline at all times, on and off the field) and encourage it in others.
4. To inform the Chair of items which their Unit wish to be included in the Agenda for an Officers' Meeting.<sup>69</sup>
5. Canvass and personally represent the views of their Unit at Officers' Meetings, or send a representative.<sup>70</sup>
6. Ensure that their Unit is kept informed of Society policy and assist the Chairperson in upholding such policies.<sup>71</sup>
7. Ensure that all Members of their Unit pay their subscriptions.<sup>72</sup>
8. Represent their Unit to other Unit Officers when a complaint arises between members of different Units.
9. Notify members of their Unit of any complaints against them from other Units.  
**Note:** Officers who find it difficult to forward all Society information to their Unit members are urged to appoint a Unit *Information Officer* to be responsible for the dissemination of information to the other Unit Members. See 1.2.4.7.4, "Unit Officer" for full details of this Officer's duties and responsibilities.
10. Inform the Secretary of the appointment of a Unit *Information Officer*, together with the new officer's name and contact address.<sup>73</sup>

### 1.2.4.8 Other Officers of the Society

These members do **not** have a voting position on the Council, but hold a particular position of responsibility within the Dark Ages Society.

**1.2.4.8.1 Costume Review Officer(s):** In order to provide all members with a level of assistance in enabling them to achieve the appropriate standard of costume for their status

<sup>67</sup> Revision of Standards 02/06/84

<sup>68</sup> Officers' Meeting 03/02/07

<sup>69</sup> see 1.2.3.1 "Full Officers' Meeting" for more detail

<sup>70</sup> see 1.2.3.1 "Full Officers' Meeting" for more detail on requirements for attendance at Officers' Meetings

<sup>71</sup> Job Descriptions 27/10/84

<sup>72</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/02/90

<sup>73</sup> See Officers' Meeting 19/10/91

(such that new members can achieve the Minimum Costume Standard within the required three months, and existing members can continue to improve the quality of their costume in keeping with their status within the Society, and in keeping with their weaponry/armour) Costume Checks will be carried out at each Society Event. It is the responsibility of the *Costume* checkers to review all costume worn by Members at an Event, and to provide constructive guidance on how the costume needs to be improved.

The checkers will comprise a team of the current and all former Chairs of the Dark Ages Society plus any Members whom this group consider helpful in ensuring a fair and accurate assessment of the costume reviewed.

These Officers should not dictate what can or cannot be worn, however their guidance should be treated with regard by both Member and that Member's Unit Officer. It is the Member's responsibility to keep their costume up to the level required by the Dark Ages Society (see 1.2.4.8, "All members of the Dark Ages Society").<sup>74</sup>

**1.2.4.8.2 Training Officers:** Training Officers (previously known as "*Gold Star*" Warriors<sup>75</sup>) are "A group of respected warriors." ..who have been... "picked to provide concentrated training for any warriors who could benefit from it."<sup>76</sup>

The list of Training Officers will be reviewed annually (at the last Officers' Meeting of each year<sup>77</sup>) for inclusion in the first Dark Ages Society Magazine of the year.<sup>78</sup>

**1.2.4.8.3 Magazine Editor:** The Editor of the Dark Ages Society Magazine is appointed by the Officers' Meeting for a two-year term.

The Editor is responsible for:<sup>79</sup>

1. Producing, up to, three Magazines per year.
2. Accounting for the Magazine budget (Currently up to a maximum of £150 per edition).
3. The co-ordination of material for the Magazine.
4. The Production and distribution of the Magazine to all Society Members.
5. Including draft agendas for Officers' Meetings in the Mid-Year and End-of-Year issues of the Magazine (see 1.2.3.1, "Full Officers' Meeting").

The Editor may supply the Dark Ages Society Magazine to people who are not members of the Society, for a fee.<sup>80</sup>

**1.2.4.8.4 Unit Information Officer:** This is a post which would normally be fulfilled by the Unit's Officer, however, recognising the many and varied pressures on Unit Officers this post has been created to allow a Unit to have an Officer who takes on the Unit Officer's duties of disseminating Society information to the Unit Members.<sup>81</sup>

In taking on this post the Unit Information Officer takes on the full responsibility for ensuring that the Unit is kept informed of Society decisions.

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<sup>74</sup> The position of *Costume Review Officer* was approved at Officers' Meeting 17/10/92 Agenda Item 8a

<sup>75</sup> Title revised Officers' Meeting 17/02/90

<sup>76</sup> Officers' Meeting 04/06/83

<sup>77</sup> see list of Agenda Items (1.2.3.1, "Full Officers' Meeting")

<sup>78</sup> see under the duties of the Editor of the Dark Ages Society Magazine (1.2.4.8.3, "Magazine Editor")

<sup>79</sup> Officers' Meeting 20/10/90

<sup>80</sup> Officers' Meeting 16/02/91

<sup>81</sup> Position created at Officers' Meeting 19/10/91

It is the Unit Officer's responsibility to inform the Secretary of the appointment of an Information Officer in a Unit, passing on the Officer's name and address, so that the Secretary can keep Event Organisers informed of how to contact all Members of the Society.

The *Information Officer's* responsibilities are:

- Keep their Unit Informed of Society information (rules, decision, recommendations, forthcoming events etc.).
- Keep their Unit Officer informed of relevant reaction from within the Unit, with regard to the disseminated information.  
**Note:** It is still the **Unit Officer's** responsibility to represent the views of their Unit within the Society.
- Keep the Secretary informed of any change in circumstances, e.g. address.

**1.2.4.8.5 N.A.R.E.S. Representatives:** As full members of NARES<sup>82</sup> the Dark Ages Society will provide two delegates at NARES meetings. These delegates will be:

- responsible for representing the Dark Ages society at the meetings, and passing back to the Society, via the Officers' Meeting, the results of the Meetings.<sup>83</sup>
- appointed by vote at an Officers' Meeting.

Although there are only two standing delegates, there is no prohibition to the Officers Meeting appointing additional representatives for specific NARES sub-committees.

**1.2.4.8.6 Archivist:** Establish and maintain an archive of relevant material...on a semi permanent basis.<sup>84</sup>

**1.2.4.8.7 Keeper of the Portaloo:** "responsible for taking" ...the Portaloo, tent and cleaning equipment... "to and from the weekend, NOT for the cleaning".<sup>85</sup>

**1.2.4.8.8 Sword and Axe<sup>86</sup> Bearers:** Although technically these are **not** Officers of the Dark Ages Society their privileged position does make it important to mention them as a separate group.

Only certain members of the Dark Ages Society may wear/or use a sword/axe. This privilege is granted subject to the following provisions:

1. Applicant must be a Full Member of Dark Ages Society.<sup>87</sup>
2. The costume, status and other equipment of the wearer must be of appropriate status.<sup>88</sup> Therefore a low ranking Saxon may not carry a sword, in this instance they would have to carry a Langsaex.
3. The application must be supported by their Officer.
4. The application must have been accepted by the voting Officers at a full Officers' Meeting **before** a sword/axe can be worn.
5. The applicant must **not** use the sword/axe until they have been properly instructed by an Officer, not from their own Unit, who is permitted to train in the **use** of the sword/axe.

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<sup>82</sup> the National Association of Re-Enactment Societies

<sup>83</sup> See Officers' Meetings 19/10/91

<sup>84</sup> As amended at Officers' Meeting 10/10/87

<sup>85</sup> Officers' Meeting 25/04/87

<sup>86</sup> Officers' Meeting 21/02/04

<sup>87</sup> Officers' Meeting 06/02/16

<sup>88</sup> Dark Ages Society Fighting and Safety Rules and Standards, Section 8.1, June 91 Dark Ages Society Magazine

6. The Training Officer must consider the applicant to be safe to fight with sword/axe and Shield as well as being competent with the spear.
7. The right to wear a sword/axe is **not** automatic. It can be revoked at any time.
8. **All** grants of the right to wear a sword/axe will be reviewed at the second Officers' Meeting of each year, and revoked if the majority of the Officers consider the sword/axe was used...
  - *excessively* or to the exclusion of the spear
  - in a non-standard manner
  - in a dangerous manner
  - without the appropriate costume, equipment or status.
9. A Member who has had their right to wear or use a sword/axe revoked must reapply for permission as for a new applicant.
10. If a Member is absent from the Dark Ages Society for 12 months then their sword/axe user status is revoked and they convert back to a wearer.<sup>89</sup>

The implications of these conditions are that applicants may not use a sword until approval has been given by an Officers' Meeting. Prior to that approval being given, an applicant may only use the sword in practice sessions under the supervision of an approved Training Officer.

#### 1.2.4.9 All Members of the Dark Ages Society

All Members of the Dark Ages Society have the following responsibilities:

1. Maintain and further the aims and ideals of the *Dark Ages Society* (see 1.1, "aims of the Society").
2. Abide by all Society Rules and Guidelines.
3. Maintain, at least, the Minimum Standards of costume, fighting and behaviour (see 2.0, "Minimum Standards" and 1.4.4, "Conduct").
4. Ensure that they do nothing which may invalidate the Dark Ages Society's Public Liability Insurance.
5. Notify the Safety Officer, and their Unit Officer, of any change in circumstances (for example with regard to their health) which may affect the Insurance cover of the Dark Ages Society.

Where a question arises over the health, and ability to fight, of a member of the Dark Ages Society, it is the responsibility of the Member to provide a letter from their doctor, on request from the Safety Officer, clearing them for involvement in Dark Ages Society combat. The Member may **not** participate until this has been provided.<sup>90</sup>

6. Maintain their Period Character (see 1.4.3, "Period Character").
7. Inform their Unit Officer of any concerns, suggestions or grievances. In particular with regard to:
  - Items for inclusion in the Agenda for Officers' Meetings.
  - Comments on the proposed Agenda.

Problems or Complaints against other Members of the Society, for example dangerous or *unsporting* fighting.

If a Member has any doubt with regard to what responsibilities that have they should ask either their Unit Officer or the appropriate Elected Officer (for example the Safety Officer about Society Insurance).

<sup>89</sup> Officers' Meeting 05/02/05

<sup>90</sup> Initial requirement Officers' Meeting 09/04/88, text revised 14/10/91first

#### 1.2.4.10 Child Members and Parents of Child Members<sup>91</sup>

The following rules apply to Child members:

- 1.A DAS Member must be the child's parent or legal guardian.
- 2.A Child Member may only attend an event if accompanied by the parent / guardian DAS member.
- 3.Child Members are covered by DAS's public liability insurance for attending DAS events.
- 4.Child Members are not entitled to take part in any combat or combat training activities.
- 5.Child Members are not eligible for any other privileges of membership: they may not stand for office, organise an event, carry an axe / sword etc.
- 6.The Child Member's name and date of birth must be supplied to the Society.
- 7.Child membership must be renewed annually.
- 8.There is no charge for Child membership.
- 9.An Officers' Meeting may revoke the Child Membership, for example if the child is not properly supervised or their behaviour puts the safety of other Members at risk.

Parents of Child Members have the following responsibilities:

- 1.The parent / guardian DAS Member is at all times responsible for the Child Member's safety and behaviour. If both parents are DAS Members, both parents are responsible.
- 2.The parent / guardian DAS Member must sign the child's membership form. If both parents are DAS Members, either of them may sign the form.

#### 1.2.5 Current Officers of the Dark Ages Society

The Dark Ages Society Officers are listed in Appendix B, "Current Officers of the Dark Ages Society" by type and post.

An updated list of all Officers posts will be published in the first two Dark Ages Society Magazines of each year. The list of Non-voting Officers will be included in the first Magazine of each year, and the Voting Officers in the second Magazine.

| <b>Officers' Post</b>   | <b>Magazine In</b> |
|---|--------------------|
| Elected Officers  | Second             |
| Unit Officers   | Second             |
| Training Officers   | First              |
| Other Officers of the dark Ages Society   | First              |
| Sword Bearers   | First              |
| <b>Note:</b> The post of Honorary President has been removed from the list of Officers to be included in the Dark Ages Society Magazine as it is a permanent position rather than an elected post or an appointed position. |                    |

<sup>91</sup> Officers' Meeting 05/11/2011

## 1.3 Financial

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### 1.3.1 Accounting

It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to control and account for all the money belonging to the Dark Ages Society (see 1.2.4.4, "Treasurer" for details of the Treasurer's responsibilities).

The Treasurer has the authority to determine the way in which the Dark Ages Society funds are invested, subject to agreement by the Chair and Secretary.

### 1.3.2 Subscription

The actual Membership Subscription fee is included in a separate section (Appendix A, "Subscription Rates"). Any changes to the Subscription fee(s) will be included in the Dark Ages Society Magazine as an update to the Handbook.

Members should check with their Unit Officers or the Treasurer or Secretary to ensure that these Subscription fees are still current.

The subscription should be paid to the Secretary when joining the Society or Renewing Membership (see 1.2.4.3, "Secretary" and 1.2.4.4, "Treasurer" for additional details of how the subscription is controlled).

Failure to pay will exclude the offender from membership, and hence will mean that they may not take part in Society Events, of whatever kind and are not covered by the Dark Ages Society Insurance.<sup>92</sup>

Unit and Elected Officers must ensure that their subscription is paid by the first event of the season. Only members of the society can be officers so a failure to join the society means that the post is vacant and a suitable candidate must be found by the Officers.<sup>93</sup>

Subscriptions may be solicited from Members by post.

Subscriptions are not refundable.

### 1.3.3 Expenses

The following Expenses can be claimed from the Society:<sup>94</sup>

1. Elected Officers may claim expenses for travelling, stationery, telephone calls etc., incurred in pursuance of their Office.
2. All Officers may claim expenses for travel to, and return from, Officers' Meetings and other meetings under the aegis of the Dark Ages Society, i.e. N.A.R.E.S., that full travel expenses will be paid.<sup>95</sup> Travel to Officers' Meetings is subject to a maximum of £200 per meeting, £30 per Officer and 10 per mile.<sup>96</sup>
3. Unit Officers and/or their nominees may claim expenses for general Society Business.

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<sup>92</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/10/92 Agenda Item 8i

<sup>93</sup> Officers' Meeting 07/02/2015

<sup>94</sup> Officers' Meeting 21/10/90

<sup>95</sup> Officers' Meeting 21/02/98

<sup>96</sup> Officers' Meeting 09/10/2010

4. Expenses may **not** be claimed for Pack/Unit business and/or the arrangement of weekends.

All claims for expenses should be accompanied by a full record of how the expenses were incurred. This record should be made available to the Treasurer.

### 1.3.4 Event Costs

Financial matters relating to the Costs of a Dark Ages Society Event are controlled by the Event Organiser. However, certain rules must be adhered to:

1. **All Members must pay the appropriate rate.**<sup>97</sup>
2. The Event Organiser is entitled to charge a surcharge, to any Member of the Society who attends an Event without having notified the Organiser, and/or paid a deposit, prior to the Event.<sup>98</sup>
3. An Event Organiser is entitled to charge half the adult price for the weekend, of any attending children over the age of 7.<sup>99</sup>
4. An Event Organiser may apply for a *Weekend Float* (see 1.3.5.1, "Weekend Floats").
5. The charge for an Event should be sufficient to cover all expenses (except 1.3.3.4) incurred. Events should not be run as a profit making exercise (see 1.3.5.1, "Weekend Floats"). Indeed running an event as a profit making exercise will place the tax status of the Dark Ages Society in question. However, Organisers should ensure that *all* of their expenses are covered and accounted for before finalising the cost of the Event.
6. Any Members who have confirmed their intention to attend an Organised Event, and for any reason cancel during the week preceding the event or cannot attend on the day, should still be expected to pay the full amount.

If any Members do cancel in the week preceding the event and refuse to reimburse the organisers, then they would be open to sanctions. Namely; said member(s) would be required to pay, in advance, for any subsequent events of that year, to be eligible to use society facilities at an event. Also that any member refusing to reimburse an organiser would, by the second year, be held to account at the next available officers meeting and may be asked to leave the society at the officers discretion.<sup>100</sup>

7. Event Organisers should ensure the Treasurer receives a full and proper account (plus receipts) of the finances of the weekend, even if the organiser funds the entire event from their personal finances. The treasurer will keep these event accounts for 6 years.<sup>101</sup>
8. If the same event organiser loses more than £30 on two separate occasions then they must be appointed an advisor, by the officers, to offer help and guidance on budget, so as not to discourage event organisers.<sup>102</sup>

### 1.3.5 Loans

All Dark Ages Society loans and floats are required to follow the following rules:<sup>103</sup>

1. Loans and Floats are available, subject to availability, free of interest to Members of the Dark Ages Society.

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<sup>97</sup> Officers' Meeting 04/02/06

<sup>98</sup> Officers' Meeting 20/10/07

<sup>99</sup> Officers' Meeting 16/10/04

<sup>100</sup> Officers' Meeting 21/02/04

<sup>101</sup> Officers' Meeting 16/02/02

<sup>102</sup> Officers' Meeting 05/02/05

<sup>103</sup> As detailed in Simon Blackmore's proposals, dated 18/05/89, and agreed, with amendments at Officers' Meeting 21/10/89

2. All applications must be in writing, signed and dated.
3. All applications should be sent to the Treasurer two weeks prior to the date the applicant wants to receive funds.
4. Must be for Society approved business only.
5. Must be used for the purpose for which they were requested.
6. Repayment of Loans is in no way related to income. These are financial loans and should be treated as such.
7. The Treasurer has no individual authority to waive any unreturned monies, this can only be done by a full Officers' Meeting.

#### **1.3.5.1 Weekend Floats**

Floats for Society Events are subject to the following, additional, rules:

1. Subject to a limit of £250.
2. Must be paid back within 14 days of the Event.
3. A proper account of income and expenditure should be kept. Copies should be sent to both Treasurer and Secretary.
4. Any profits which result from a weekend should be paid into the Dark Ages Society Central funds together with the returned Float.
5. A Balance Sheet must be provided if any proportion of a Float is not returned.<sup>104</sup>

#### **1.3.5.2 Personal Loans**

Personal Loans are subject to the following, additional, rules:

1. Subject to a limit of £50 per applicant.
2. Must be paid back within 6 months by instalments as agreed by the Treasurer and applicant. Members who are unemployed during this period may, on the recommendation of the Treasurer, be allowed to extend the repayment period to 12 months (subject to approval at an Officers' Meeting).

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<sup>104</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/10/92 Agenda Item 8j and ref. Item on charging for events in 1.3.4, "Event Costs"

## 1.4 Rules

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### 1.4.1 General

All Rules of the Dark Ages Society must be applied at **all** Society events. Rules cannot be changed or waived, whether on a permanent or temporary basis, except by a full Officers' Meeting.<sup>105</sup> The basic Rules of the Dark ages Society are:<sup>106</sup>

Membership of the Dark ages Society is open to all persons over the age of 18 years, with a genuine interest in our chosen period of history; regardless of race or religion, but subject to each person being found acceptable on their own merits. The *Dark ages Society* reserves the right to refuse any application for membership if in the opinion of the majority of the Council, such a member would contravene the aims or rules of the Society.

### 1.4.2 Membership

#### 1.4.2.1 Types of Membership

The following are valid forms of Membership of the Dark ages Society:

**1.4.2.1.1 Full:** This is the basic Member of the Society. It covers all Society members who have been accepted as eligible by an Officers' Meeting, following their probationary year and have reached, and are continuing to maintain, the Minimum Standards for Full Membership (see 1.4.2.2, "Eligibility for Membership").

Full members can be:

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Combatant Warriors</b> | Spear and Shield bearing fighters, whether men or women, who are dressed to appear to be men.                                    |
| <b>Combatant Women</b>    | Spear bearing women, dressed as women.   |
| <b>Non-Combatants</b>     | Men or Women who choose not to fight. Non-Combatants <b>must</b> wear white headgear for identification purposes. <sup>107</sup> |

All non-combatants should be made known to all Members at an Event prior to the start of fighting. Normally this would be done at the same time as the Safety Check. If a Member chooses to be non-combatant during an Event, or even a specific fight, they may **not** change to combatant until fighting has finished. All Members must be clearly informed if a non-combatant changes to combatant, and vice versa, during an event.

Controls on the number of these Members in the Society and in a Unit are defined in the section on Unit Organisation (see 1.4.6.1, "Unit Organisation"). There is no requirement for a Member to be restricted to one of these *types*. It is up to the individual to choose their role, provided it remains within the rules of the Society.

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<sup>105</sup> Officers' Meeting 21/10/90

<sup>106</sup> See Minutes and addendum 02/06/84

<sup>107</sup> Officers' Meeting 18/10/03

**1.4.2.1.2 Probationary:** Members of the Society who have not yet been ratified by the Officers. Probationary Members fall into the same sub-categories as Full Members.

**1.4.2.1.3 New:** A New Member is a Probationary Member of the Dark Ages Society who is attending their first event. It is a financial status for Membership Subscriptions and should be treated as Single Event Membership for all other Purposes.

**1.4.2.1.4 Family:** There is no formal *Family Membership Scheme* in the Dark ages Society. However, there is no restriction to Families attending Society events, provided they conform to the relevant guidelines (see 1.4.2.2, "Eligibility for Membership", 1.4.2.3, "Family Membership" and 1.2.4.10, "Child Members and Parents of Child Members" for more detail).

**1.4.2.1.5 Single Event:** Single Event Members are required to pay the Single Event Member Subscription fee (see Appendix A, "Subscription Rates" for fee). This is not refundable. Single Event Membership permits the user to take part in any Society activities at that Event. They are treated as Probationary Members for that event only.<sup>108</sup>

**1.4.2.1.6 Banquet Guest:** Guests at banquets (see 1.4.4.4, "At Banquet") are required to pay the Guest Subscription fee (see Appendix A, "Subscription Rates" for fee). This is for insurance purposes and is refundable at the end of an Event. Banquet Guest Membership does **not** permit the user to take part in any Society activities except the Banquet.<sup>109</sup>

**1.4.2.1.7 Magazine Only:** This does not provide Membership of the Dark Ages Society. It is for administrative purposes and serves only to allow people interested in purchasing the Dark Ages Society Magazine to receive copies without joining the Society.

## 1.4.2.2 Eligibility for Membership

Membership of Dark Ages Society is dependent on the applicant achieving, and maintaining, the necessary criteria for eligibility.

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Declaration</b>        | All members and guests of the Society must, as soon as possible (and particularly before combat), pay the appropriate subscription and sign a declaration reading: <sup>110</sup><br><p style="text-align: center;">"I declare that I am over 18 years of age and agree to abide by the rules of <b>The Dark Ages Society</b>."</p>                                     |
| <b>Acceptance of Risk</b> | All activities in the <i>Dark Ages Society</i> are undertaken at the persons' own risk. No Officer can be held responsible for damage or loss of property by, or injury to, any other Prospective or Full Member.   |
| <b>Age</b>                | Membership of the Dark Ages Society is open to all persons over the age of 18 years. <sup>111</sup><br><br>In the case of the under 18s, they may only take part if their parent, or actual legal guardian, is present at the weekend. All under 18's taking part must become child members – see 1.2.4.10 "Child Members and Parents of Child Members". <sup>112</sup> |

<sup>108</sup> Officers' Meeting 09/10/10, 02/02/13

<sup>109</sup> Officers' Meeting 02/02/13

<sup>110</sup> Officers' Meeting 02/02/13

<sup>111</sup> See Minutes and Addendum 02/06/84

<sup>112</sup> Officers' Meeting 23/11/85, 05/02/05, 05/11/2011

Under 18s may only take part in non-combatant roles.

Children and people supervising them should behave and be treated as ordinary members of the public on the battlefield, whether in costume or not.<sup>113</sup>

#### **Health**

Anyone whose medical condition is in question will be referred to the Society Rules relating to Members' Responsibilities with regard to health, fighting and Personal Liability (see **Declaration** and **Acceptance of Risk** under 1.4.2.2, "Eligibility for Membership", 1.2.4.8, "All Members of the Dark Ages Society" and Fighting and Safety Rules and Standards).

#### **Behaviour (1)**

All Probationary and Full Members, regardless of rank, must abide by the Rules of the Dark Ages Society.

Failure to be bound by the Rules of the Society will result in the offender being barred from the Dark Ages Society.

#### **Behaviour (2)**

All Probationary and Full Members, regardless of rank, must show consideration for both other Members of the Society and members of the Public at all times.

#### **Standards**

All Full Members must maintain the *Minimum Standards* before renewing Membership.

#### **Unit Membership**

All Members of the Dark Ages Society **must** belong to a Unit, and have a Unit Officer

#### **Ratification**

Acceptance of Probationary Members as Full Members of the Dark Ages Society is subject to ratification of Membership by the voting Officers at a Full Officers' Meeting.<sup>114</sup>

#### **Ratification Eligibility**

To be eligible for ratification, a Probationary Member must have attended a reasonable number of DAS events (typically five), achieved the minimum standards and been proposed by their Unit Leader at an Officer's Meeting.<sup>115</sup>

### **1.4.2.3 Family Membership**

Organisers of weekends must be aware that people may wish to bring their children along too, and could point out in the information whether there are any special features available, or, whether it would be unsuitable for young children.

However, the onus rests with the parents to find out what is available, and they also have the responsibility for the behaviour and safety of their children.

See 1.4.2.2, "Eligibility for Membership" and 1.2.4.10 "Child Members and Parents of Child Members" for specific details relating to Under 18s in the Dark Ages Society.

### **1.4.2.4 Removal of...**

Any Member contravening the Rules of the Society, or in being in any way careless of other Peoples' safety or enjoyment (whether Members or not), at a Society gathering<sup>116</sup>, or in any

<sup>113</sup> Officers' Meeting 25/05/85

<sup>114</sup> See list of Agenda Items for 1.2.3.1, "Full Officers' Meeting"

<sup>115</sup> Officer's Meeting 18/10/08, 06/02/2010, 18/02/2012

<sup>116</sup> This includes all events using the name of the Dark Ages Society whether they are full Society events or local Unit practices and at all times during that event, whether on the field or relaxing afterwards.

way which may bring the Dark Ages Society into disrepute, may be cautioned or, given sufficient grounds, have their membership revoked.

A decision of this nature can only be made by a vote of the Society Officers in an Officers' Meeting.

People who have been expelled from the Society should not be invited to Society Events without first consulting the Council.<sup>117</sup>

### 1.4.3 Period Character

All Members of the Dark Ages Society, whether Full or Probationary, are expected to have, and maintain, an authentic Name, Character and Life History. These aspects of a Member's character should be created with care, and with the advice of experienced Members of the Society. Points to consider when developing the character include:

- Careful consideration should be given to the name as this is one of the most difficult parts of the character to change, once established. Ensure that it is authentic and suitable for the Character.
- The Character should be both plausible and historically possible.
- The Character's Social Standing should fit the Social Standing of the Member. For Probationary members this should always be a low status. The status of a character should be allowed to develop as the Member's experience and status within the Society increases.
- The Life History, race, religion, social position and attitudes should all be compatible with those of the existing members of the Unit. A new member should be prepared to fit in with the histories of the established members and not try to impose their own whims.
- Outlandish stories should be avoided. Keep your personal history simple. A Character can, and should, be developed through role-play within the Society.

Once the character has been defined the Costume and equipment should be added to reflect this character. Therefore if the character is Saxon, all of the clothes should be in the *Saxon style*<sup>118</sup>, the jewellery should be Saxon and the weapons Saxon. In addition, the quality of these items should reflect the status of the character, so only very important or respected members of the Society should have mail or swords<sup>119</sup>, or rich cloth with fine braid.

Members are free to change any, or all, of their character or history (for example to reflect a change of Unit or of position within the Unit). The only condition is that once changed it is the Member's responsibility to ensure that their new character is known and does not cause confusion which might damage the atmosphere or role-play within the Society. As a general rule if a major change is performed, for example a switch from a Viking to Saxon Unit, this should be done as a clean break. The old character killed off and a new one created, rather than having a converted Dane fighting for the Saxons because they like the long tunics! This does of course mean new costume and equipment that is the price of authenticity and a new character.

**Note:** Changing Units is probably one of the most politically sensitive actions a Member can make. Consideration must be made to the effects of the change on the Members old Unit and on the balance of Units within the Society. At all stages the move should be discussed with the Member's existing Officer **before** any change of Unit is performed.

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<sup>117</sup> Officers' Meeting 22/03/86

<sup>118</sup> see 2.1, "Costume" for more detail.

<sup>119</sup> There are additional controls over the use of Swords, and Langsaexes, in the Society, see 2.3, "Fighting".

The basic rule is... if in doubt, ask the experienced members of the Society. If you are still unsure... go for the simple and plain, as it is easy to develop and embellish as time goes by; it is difficult to undo mistakes already made.

## 1.4.4 Conduct

### 1.4.4.1 In Public

- Safety** At all times ensure that members of the general Public are not endangered or harassed. This entails keeping a safe distance between members of the Public<sup>120</sup> and ensuring that the actions of Members of the Dark Ages Society will not pose a threat to the Public nor will they in any way invalidate the Dark Ages Society's Public Liability Insurance.
- General** At all times respect the rights and enjoyment of the general Public, and act accordingly.
- Weapons** Members of the Society are not allowed to wear weapons, including all knives, in pubs. Failure to comply could result in expulsion from the Society.<sup>121</sup>
- In the light of recent legislation with regard to the use of knives etc., and because of the risk of attracting the attention of undesirables, members are strongly advised **not** to carry any form of side-arm in the pubs, and to take great care if they do.

### 1.4.4.2 In Hall/Camp Site

- Noise** Anyone making noise after 1am on a Friday and 2am on a Saturday should be quiet when requested<sup>122</sup>.
- Horse-play** Horse-play has occasionally got out of hand. Please be aware of the dangers of glass, fire, furniture and sharp eating knives.
- Dogs** Should be kept under control on camp sites.<sup>123</sup>

### 1.4.4.3 On Fighting Site

- Safety** See 1.4.4.1, "In Public"
- Lunchtime** Members should refrain from long lunchtime sessions. Fighting under the influence of alcohol or other substances, is not covered by the Public Liability Insurance.<sup>124</sup>
- Smoking** Smoking is not authentic, so please do not smoke whilst the script/fighting is taking place, even if you are not directly involved.
- When smoking on the battlefield, please be careful to extinguish all cigarettes and matches properly.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> For Public Displays this entails a double roped area with a minimum of six feet between the ropes. For *Free Fighting*, fighting should cease if members of the Public come near to a fighting site and spears and shields be placed on the ground whenever horses approach. Particular care must be taken in areas where cyclists may be present, due to the increased risk of injury in the event of a collision.

<sup>121</sup> Officers' Meeting 06/02/2010

<sup>122</sup> Officers' Meeting 04/06/83

<sup>123</sup> restated at Officers' Meeting 22/11/86

<sup>124</sup> Insurance Policy Schedule issued 10 September 2004

<sup>125</sup> Officers' Meeting 23/11/85

- General** Respect the safety and enjoyment of other Society members by *playing the game*, and following the spirit as well as the letter of the Society Rules.
- Dogs and Children** Children and dogs are allowed on fighting sites only under the control of an adult and not with a fighting unit at any time. The designated person attached to the child/dog must comply with any reasonable request made by any member of the Society. If any Member has a problem with the children or dogs and does not wish to make a direct approach, they should go through their officer. Should reasonable control not be exercised, the Officers present may require the person and child/animal to leave immediately.<sup>126</sup>

#### 1.4.4.4 At Banquet

- Smoking** Smoking at a *Dark Ages Society* banquet is **not authentic**, it is impolite and, in addition, it is a health risk. All halls are no smoking at all times,<sup>127</sup> so members are requested to show consideration to others and to refrain from smoking inside the hall, however, please can Members come back in immediately they are finished, as a half empty hall shows a lack of respect for the hosts.<sup>128</sup>
- Weapons** No weapon, of any kind, may be used during a banquet.
- Swords** Swords may only be worn at a banquet for display purposes. The only Members of Dark Ages Society entitled to wear a sword at a Banquet are:
- Unit Officers
  - Ex-Unit Officers
  - Sword Bearers (see 2.3, "Fighting" for a definition of Society Sword Bearers).
- Children** Children (under 18s) are allowed in banquets only with a clearly designated adult, and on the understanding that the Dark Ages Society is a society for adults. The parent must be aware of the potentially offensive nature of banquets; Members will not be expected to tone down (this goes for the whole weekend).<sup>129</sup>
- Dogs** Dogs are not generally allowed at banquets, but the event organiser may waive this by prior arrangement, at their discretion, if the venue allows dogs. The dog must be under the control of an adult and the designated adult must comply with any reasonable request made by any member of the society. If any Member has a problem with the dog and does not wish to make a direct approach, they should go through an officer. Should reasonable control not be exercised, the Officers present may require the person and dog to leave immediately. Should there be an issue the dog may be banned from any future events. Dogs are not allowed in halls when people are sleeping overnight.<sup>130</sup>
- Guests** To avoid upsetting the atmosphere by those not familiar with, and not intending to join, *Dark Ages Society*, the number of *friends* or *Banquet Guests* allowed to attend should be limited to two per Unit<sup>131</sup> (see 1.4.2.1, "Types of Membership" for definition of a *Banquet Guest*).

#### 1.4.5. Affecting Fighting

<sup>126</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/02/96

<sup>127</sup> Officers' Meeting 26/02/94

<sup>128</sup> Officers' Meeting 19/02/00

<sup>129</sup> Officers' Meeting 17/02/96

<sup>130</sup> Officers' Meeting 03/02/2018

<sup>131</sup> Officers' Meeting 09/04/89

See the *Dark Ages Society - Fighting and Safety Rules and Standards* document.

No New Member may fight at a weekend unless they meet the following criteria:

- They have been to a properly organised Training session, ideally before the Event.
- They take part in a practice session with a Unit Officer, or *Training Officer* (who is not in the same Unit) before the start of the Event.
- The Officer who takes them for the Practice considers them fit to fight.
- They take only a non-combat role in the first period (typically in the morning) to allow them to get a feel for fighting in a Unit,<sup>132</sup> unless signed off by 2 Officers outside their own Unit to say they are safe to fight.<sup>133</sup>

#### **1.4.5.1 Renewal of fighting probation for Full Members**

The process for renewal of probation is as follows:

Step 1: If the officers consider it necessary to put someone back on probation because the standard of their fighting has fallen below an acceptable level, they are to be given a year to improve, at the end of which the officers will review their performance.

If they are found to have regained an acceptable standard at that review, they will be put back on full fighting status. If not, proceed to Step 2

Step 2: If they have not regained an acceptable standard by the first review, then they continue on probation for a further year.

Step 3: If they have not regained an acceptable standard by the second review, then their fighting status is permanently revoked.

In the event that they regain an acceptable standard and full fighting status is reinstated at the first review, but are subsequently found to have fallen below an acceptable standard again, then they have one further chance at renewed probation. If they are found not to have regained an acceptable standard at the second review after a further year on probation, then their fighting status is permanently revoked.

In the event that they regain an acceptable standard by the second review, but are subsequently found to have fallen below an acceptable standard again thereafter, then their fighting status is permanently revoked.

In all cases, the acceptable level that must be attained is the same as that required for a Probationary Member to be accepted as a Full Member.

Any requirement for, and reviews of, renewed probation will be conducted at each Officers Meeting.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Officers' Meeting 21/01/89

<sup>133</sup> Officers' Meeting 18/10/97, 21/02/98 & 20/10/01

<sup>134</sup> Officers' Meeting 2/02/2019

## 1.4.6 Affecting Units/Packs

The Unit is the fundamental organisational basis of the Dark Ages Society.

### 1.4.6.1 Unit Organisation

The (rough) limit set was for a maximum of 100 Warriors, excluding officers. A division of five Norse and five Saxon and Angle Units within the Dark Ages Society.

The maximum number of Warriors, (including Officers, but excluding non-combatants) allowed within the Society is 110, divided evenly between a maximum of ten Units.

Units may consist of (a maximum of):<sup>135</sup>

- 11 Spear and Shield Bearing Warriors.<sup>136</sup>
- 4<sup>137</sup> Women fighting with Spear only.<sup>138</sup>
- No limit to the number of Non-Combatant Members.

A Unit must have a minimum of 3 warriors,<sup>139</sup> including the Unit Officer (all being Full Members). Any Unit not meeting these requirements may be disbanded, at the discretion of the Council.

The Unit is a reflection of its dedication to the aims of the Society.

Each Unit must be able to perform all basic drills safely and should be proud of its overall authenticity of appearance, and its determination to take a lead, i.e. in being the first on the field in the morning, lending a hand clearing away etc. at Weekends.

Whenever a Unit has recruited to its full strength, any more prospective new members must come under the control of the nearest incomplete allied, or even 'enemy' Unit. If there are no more incomplete Units of the preferred side in that particular area, the prospective new member has only the chance of joining the other side. If this is not to their liking they will not join.

There is no pressure on any Unit to keep recruiting. With the Society's high ideals for authenticity, we should really only be looking for those people who have a genuine love of history and who clearly appreciate what the Dark Ages Society is trying to do.

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<sup>135</sup> Officers' Meeting 21/10/89

<sup>136</sup> *Warrior* in this context, refers to any Full Member of the Dark Ages Society, whether male or female, who is dressed as a man and carries a Spear and Shield.

<sup>137</sup> Officers' Meeting 19/10/91

<sup>138</sup> Men (or women dressed as men) are excluded from this section as the *Dark Ages Society Fighting and Safety Rules and Standards* strongly discourage warriors fighting with Spear alone. In addition the total number of Women fighting with Spear only should **not exceed** the number of Members fighting this Shield and Spear.

<sup>139</sup> Officers' Meeting 21/10/89

### 1.4.6.2 Creating a New Unit

A group of Full Society members who wish to form a New Unit must comply with the following criteria:

- They must have a Member to act as Officer, this candidate must complete the *New Unit Officer* criteria below.
- They must fall within the minimum and maximum Unit size.
- There must be space for a new Unit within the Guideline number of Norse and English Units.
- They must have an acceptable number of experienced Society members in their Unit.

If they fulfil these criteria then they must notify an Officers' Meeting that they wish to form a Provisional Unit.

Once formed this Unit will be on Probation for one year, at the end of which an Officers' Meeting will vote on whether to accept the Unit as a Full Unit within the Society.

Prior to this vote, a review of the Unit will be made after six months by the Council, and any recommendations passed on to the Unit.

The Council may extend the period of Probation if it is felt necessary. This extension should not be greater than an additional year. At the end of this second period a *Yes/No* decision must be taken on whether to accept the new Unit.

### 1.4.6.3 New Unit Officer

When a Unit wishes to have a new Unit Officer, an Officers' Meeting must be notified of the proposed change.

Once the Council have been notified the New Officer will be considered to be on Probation for a year. At the end of the probationary period the Council will vote whether to accept the Officer as the new Unit Officer.

Prior to this vote, a review of the Officer will be made after six months by the Council, and any recommendations passed on to the Officer.

During the probationary period the status of the Unit is unaltered.

### 1.4.6.4 Ex-Officers

Ex-Officers shall retain their "in character" privileges (eg. wearing a sword in banquets<sup>140</sup>) if they wish to, but they will not have the rights of current Unit Officers (eg. votes in Council). They do retain their standard rights and obligations as Members of the Dark Ages Society.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> See 1.2.4.7.8, "Sword Bearers"

<sup>141</sup> This includes the obligation to be a member of an existing Unit (as agreed in *Amendments to the Handbook*, Officers Meeting 15/02/92)

## 1.5 Organisation of Events

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The Event Organiser has sole responsibility for an Event. They are responsible for ensuring that **all** Society Rules are followed.

Responsibilities include:

1. Financial control (see 1.3.5.1, "Weekend Floats")
2. Liaising with the Safety Officer to ensure that all Safety guidelines are followed<sup>142</sup> and that Public Liability Insurance is provided.<sup>143</sup>
3. Notifying the Secretary of the planned event as soon as possible, to avoid clashes, and to allow notification of Events at Officers' Meetings. Where possible Major Events should be notified at Officers' Meetings.<sup>144</sup>

Any Event to be covered by *Dark Ages Society* Insurance (apart from members only practices, which are automatically covered<sup>145</sup>) must be notified in advance to the Secretary.

When notified, the Secretary will:

- Formally accept an Event when it is a:
  1. Private Event to which *all* members are invited.
  2. Public Event/Display to which *all* members are invited.
- In consultation with the Chair, use their discretion as to whether an Event should be approved or referred to an Officers' Meeting, if it does not fulfil the requirements to be accepted automatically.

The Secretary and Chair have no right to refuse to accept an Event as a Society Event, they may only refer it to an Officers' Meeting.

Only an Officers' Meeting may reject an Event.

- Point out any possible clashes to the organisers.

Once an event has been approved, the Organiser should notify the Editor of the *Dark Ages Society Magazine*.

### 1.5.1 Event Agendas

Event Organisers should allow time in the schedule for their Event to perform the following activities:

- Weapon Inspection
- Costume Inspection
- Practice/Training session

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<sup>142</sup> This is of particular importance when organising a Public Event as the provision for a double-roped display area will be required.

<sup>143</sup> In particular who will provide the Insurance. At a Public event this would normally be the person/organisation who has hired the *Dark Ages Society* but this **must** be established, and confirmed, **prior** to the Event taking place.

<sup>144</sup> Officers' Meeting 21/01/89

<sup>145</sup> Members only practices are still formal Society Events and must conform to the conditions of Safety and behaviour as for other *Private Society Events* (see 1.5.1.2, "Private Events")

A sample Agenda for an event might look something like:

#### Saturday

- Costume and Weapons Check
- Site Safety Check
- Practice session/Rehearsal for display
- Free fight/Display
- Trading session
- Banquet

#### Sunday

- Clear up
- Weapon Check
- Free fight/Boar hunt

### 1.5.2 Food at Events <sup>146</sup>

1. As a closed society DAS is not subject to Food Hygiene regulations. It is however the duty of the event organiser and any others involved in food preparation to ensure that the highest standards practical are applied to preparation of food.
2. Food will be sourced from reliable sources. If there are any doubts regarding the safety of any ingredients or foodstuffs they will not be used within DAS.

### 1.5.3 Types of Event

#### 1.5.3.1 Private Events

Private events are Society Events organised purely for members of the Society.

This type of Event is the mainstay of the Society. Any Event organised by Society Members, to which *all* Society members are invited to attend and which is in keeping with the Aims of the Society, should be considered an acceptable Event.

Unit Practices are Private Events, as by definition the inclusion of a Public Display (whether for a live audience or film/TV) would negate the possibility of it being solely for practice.

A Private Event which restricts attendance must be referred to the Secretary and Chair for approval, and may be referred to an Officers' Meeting if deemed necessary.

#### 1.5.3.2 Public Events

Public Events are Events where members of the Society are involved in providing a Public display, whether military or civilian based, to further the Society aims.

Typically these events should be open to all Society Members. However where only small numbers are required (for example at local school fetes), provided the Secretary is notified, this type of Event should be considered acceptable.

**Note:** Organisers of small events of this kind should be aware that they may not exclude any Full Members of the Society from these events, unless an Officers' Meeting has specifically allowed this restriction.

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<sup>146</sup> Officers' Meeting 02/02/2013

### 1.5.3.3 Joint Society Events

Since *Dark Ages Society* has its own character, any visiting persona from other Societies should be prepared to fit in with *Dark Ages Society*. Then individuals wishing to join *Dark Ages Society* may do so, as long as they are prepared to abide by our Rules and Regulations.

The *Dark Ages Society* is **not** in favour of joint weekends.

The *Dark Ages Society* has no objections to its own members joining other Societies.<sup>147</sup>

All official Correspondence between the Dark Ages Society and other Societies, and or official/quasi-official groups,<sup>148</sup> must be carried out with the knowledge and consent of an Officers' Meeting.<sup>149</sup> By preference this should be by notification at an Officers' Meeting. If there is insufficient time to wait for the next Officers' Meeting the Chair must be informed **prior** to any correspondence being entered into on behalf of the Dark Ages Society.

This requirement for notification for Dark Ages society correspondence does **not** include correspondence regarding events as this is the responsibility of the Event Organiser (see 1.5, "Organisation of Events").

### 1.5.3.4 Non-Society Events

The Dark Ages Society does not accept involvement with any Event which has not been approved by an Officers' Meeting.

Events which an Officers' Meeting deems to be Non-Society Events will not be covered by the *Dark Ages Society* Insurance.

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<sup>147</sup> Officers' Meeting 25/04/87

<sup>148</sup> For example the National Association of Re-Enactment Societies (N.A.R.E.S.)

<sup>149</sup> In the case of N.A.R.E.S. see 1.2.4.7.5, "N.A.R.E.S. Representatives" for how this is carried out

## 1.6 Members' Personal Information

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DAS will:<sup>150</sup>

1. Only ask for personal information that the society needs to have.
2. Share personal information within the society only when absolutely necessary (eg ICE information) and to the smallest possible number of members. Only the Secretary (or another officer deputising for them) will have access to all personal information.
3. Never share personal information with other organisations unless required for a legal, regulatory, or emergency reason.
4. Provide a copy of each member's personal information to them when requested.
5. Delete a former member's personal information on receipt of a request from them.
6. Retain personal information for a maximum of 1 year from a membership ending.

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<sup>150</sup> Officers' Meeting 25/10/2019