

ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER NATIONAL FRATERNITY OF GREAT BRITAIN STATUTES

INTRODUCTION

The Secular Franciscan Order 'holds a special place' in the Franciscan Family¹ It shares a 'life-giving union'² and 'co-responsibility'³ with the Franciscan Religious 'to whom the Secular fraternity has been united for centuries'⁴. Their common goal is 'to make present the charism of their common Seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church'⁵. They do this by observing 'the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ through following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi'⁶ in response to the needs and expectations of the Holy Church in the condition of changing times'⁷

To achieve this purpose, the 'organic union'⁸ of the Secular Franciscan Order 'is divided into fraternities of various levels - local, regional, national and international'⁹ coordinated among themselves according to the norms of the Rule and the General Constitutions. 'Each one has its own juridical personality within the Church'¹⁰ and 'should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan spirit and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members'¹¹.

Therefore, to provide for life in fraternity on the national level and to co-ordinate and unite the national fraternity of Great Britain, comprising England, Scotland, Wales and Gibraltar, with the other levels¹², the national fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of Great Britain does hereby establish and adopt these national Statutes.

TITLE 1: THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Article 1

1. The national fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of Great Britain is the organic union of all the local and regional fraternities, canonically erected and emerging, existing in the territory of Great Britain. (cf GGCC 65.1)
2. The national fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of Great Britain has its own juridical personality in the Church and is organized in regional fraternities. (cf GGCC 65.3)
3. The national fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of Great Britain, canonically determined as such, is recognized in the civic realm as a Lay Order.
4. The national fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of Great Britain has its seat in Arkley, London, at the Poor Clare Convent, 102 Galley Lane, Barnet EN5 4AN.

Article 2

The business of the national fraternity shall be conducted by the national council.

TITLE 2: THE LOCAL FRATERNITY

Article 3

Each fraternity is animated and guided by a council and a minister, elected in the way and on the terms provided for in GGCC Articles 76-79. The Spiritual Assistant is a member of the council and exercises the office in accordance with Article 90.2 of the GGCC and Article 12.3 of the Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the OFS: he cannot vote in economic matters and in elections. The representative of Youfra is also a member of the Council, with the right to vote if he/she is a professed member.

Article 4

The Composition of the Local Fraternity Council

The composition and duties of the local fraternity council are in accordance with Articles 49 -52 of GGCC unless otherwise specified in these Statutes.

The local fraternity, bearing in mind local circumstances, will decide the number of elected officers.

1. Elected officers will include the minister, the vice minister, the secretary, the treasurer and the formator.
2. The office of formator may be combined with another office. If necessary, the local fraternity council may request assistance from the formator of the regional council.
3. Bearing in mind the needs of a local fraternity, in addition to these 4 or 5 councillors a maximum of three additional councillors may be elected whose duties will be agreed by the local fraternity.

Article 5

Duties of the Officer Responsible for Local Formation

1. To provide suitable materials to enable candidates to grow in understanding and appreciation of gospel living in the way of Saint Francis.
2. To attend formation courses and workshops at least once a year in order to develop and maintain useful relevant skills and to be aware of and up to date with developments in the Church and the Franciscan Family.
3. To guide and encourage candidates to persevere in their pursuit of the way of St Francis.
4. To discern and make appropriate recommendations to the fraternity council as to the readiness of candidates for profession.
5. To assist the fraternity council with the preparation of ongoing formation for the fraternity members.

Article 6

The local fraternity shall meet at least once a month.

Article 7

Emerging Fraternities

1. An emerging fraternity shall consist of at least five professed members before canonical establishment can be considered.
2. Prior to the canonical establishment of an emerging fraternity, the nearest available local fraternity, designated by the regional council to which the new fraternity will be related, shall provide for the initiation, initial and ongoing formation of its members.
3. The members of the emerging fraternity shall be initiated, admitted and professed into the above described local fraternity. Should such a local fraternity not exist, then the regional council shall be responsible for all the above activities.
4. Elections shall take place within six months of canonical establishment.
5. A group containing at least five professed members of a local fraternity may form a new fraternity, with the approval of the regional executive council, providing that their original fraternity is still able to function properly.

Article 8

Decision Making

1. The quorum necessary for decisions to be taken by the local fraternity council shall be more than one half of all its members.
2. The adoption of any resolutions requires the approval of an absolute majority of members present.

Article 9

Small Fraternities

Definition: a small fraternity is a fraternity that cannot elect a council

Fraternities unable to elect a council shall have a choice of options:

1. Where distance, or some other unforeseen circumstance, is a problem, a small fraternity may be linked to the regional council, according to article 31.1 GGCC.
2. The members of a small fraternity can transfer to another fraternity, according to article 55 GGCC.
3. Fraternal accompaniment may be offered to a small fraternity which would be linked with a larger fraternity. With the agreement and under the responsibility of the regional council, the local council of the larger fraternity will animate and guide the small fraternity for a maximum period of five years. During this time the fraternity will be helped to become autonomous. After five years the small fraternity will have recovered, with new members, or the remaining members will transfer to another fraternity.

TITLE 3: PROVISION FOR LIFE IN FRATERNITY

Article 10

The Time of Initiation¹⁴

1. A person who is interested in the Secular Franciscan way of life shall attend at least six monthly meetings as a visitor before requesting, in writing, to enter initiation as an enquirer. The period as visitor will enable the council and the visitor to discern whether or not he/she has both the interest and disposition to proceed towards Profession in the OFS. The fraternity will also have made sure that the member is eligible to enter the Order (GGCC Art 37.3). If the local fraternity council agrees that the visitor may have a vocation to the OFS, the period of enquiry will begin with the Ceremony of Introduction.
2. The period of enquiry shall last at least one year, during which time, under the guidance of the formation minister, the enquirer shall complete the course of initiation approved by the national council of the OFS of Great Britain. The council must be satisfied that the enquirer shows a clear sign of vocation to the way of life of a Secular Franciscan.
3. A person who has recently been received into the Catholic Church must normally spend a minimum of two years in full communion with the Church before proceeding to initiation. The time as visitor may run concurrently. At the discretion of the local fraternity, this time may be reduced by a year for former members of the Anglican Franciscan family.

Article 11

Admission to the Order¹⁵

1. A person who has completed the period of initiation as an enquirer, and been admitted to the Order as a candidate shall spend a minimum of two years in Initial formation, under the guidance of the formator, completing the course of formation approved by the national council of the OFS of Great Britain, before Profession takes place.
2. The minimum age for admission into the OFS of Great Britain shall be eighteen years.

Article 12 Non-attendance

1. A fraternity member who is unable to attend the meetings because of age, sickness or distance remains part of the fraternity, cared for and kept in touch with and encouraged to contribute to the funds and in any other ways possible
2. If a member is otherwise absent from the meetings, for no valid reason, for several months, article 56 of the OFS General Constitutions will be applied, in the spirit of the CIOFS Presidency instruction contained in the circular letter n. 18 - 2002-2008, entitled "Treatment of non-active members", and dated October 4, 2004.

Article 13

The Sign

1. OFSGB has the Tau as its distinctive sign.
2. The national fraternity of OFSGB offers a choice of two distinctive tau, shown below, either the national sign or the International badge. A candidate will choose which sign he/she will receive at Profession.



Article 14

Financial Support¹⁶

1. The sole source of regular income for the Secular Franciscan Order in Great Britain is the annual per capita contribution.
2. Fraternity councils, through the regional councils of the national fraternity, shall provide an annual per capita contribution to the national council in the amount determined by the national council.
3. The assets of the national council shall comprise funds received by the annual per capita contribution from the funds of the fraternities via the regional councils, donations, subsidies, legacies, investments and interest on same and any other gifts received.
4. The national council shall contribute annually to the funds for the expenses of the Presidency and Secretariat of the international council of the OFS in the amount to be determined by that international council.

Article 15

Sections and Groups

1. Sections or groups of members sharing particular common needs or interests may be established within the fraternity¹⁷.
2. The fraternity council considers the constitution of these groups and approves the programme of their meetings and the activities that they intend to carry out. The minimum of number of members in each group shall be three.
3. The fraternity council shall delegate a professed member, preferably a council member of the fraternity, to guide the groups.
4. These groups continue to attend meetings of their local fraternity.

Article 16

Companions of Local Fraternities¹⁸

It may be possible for Christians who wish to follow the Secular Franciscan way of life but are not eligible to join the Order, to become Companions of a local fraternity.

1. Companions follow the Secular Franciscan way of life but do not become members of our Order.
2. Application to become a Companion must be considered by the local fraternity council on an individual basis.
3. The consent of all professed members of the fraternity must be obtained by a secret ballot.
4. Accepted applicants must follow the same procedure as those who seek entrance into the Order. All must follow the initiation and initial formation programmes and attend fraternity meetings regularly.
5. Commitment to being a Companion of the fraternity is confirmed in a ceremony of welcome.
6. Companions cannot vote or bear office.
7. In order to secure the identity of the Secular Franciscan Order within the Roman Catholic Church, subject to Canon Law, Companions may be accepted subject to the following limitations:
 - a. No applicant shall be accepted if there is a lay Franciscan Community of their denomination within a reasonable distance of the fraternity meeting place.
 - b. A local fraternity wishing to accept a person as a Companion must be considered by the regional council to be well established in terms of maturity and stability and must be regularly accompanied by a Spiritual Assistant.
 - c. The total number of Companions accepted into a local fraternity shall not exceed one in six of the total number of admitted and professed members of the fraternity.
 - d. Companionship is open to Christians who have been baptised in a form that is accepted by the Catholic Church.
 - e. The current rules regarding Eucharistic sharing between the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian Churches shall be respected.

Article 17

Friends of St Francis¹⁹

In the spirit of dialogue with people of other religions, a local fraternity may decide to conduct its own group of Friends of Saint Francis under the following conditions:

1. An applicant must be approved by the local fraternity council.
2. A Friend has no obligations or commitments unless he/she assumes a responsibility in the group.
3. A member of the group is not admitted to the OFS meetings unless by invitation for a particular occasion.

4. The leader of the group shall be a professed member of the local fraternity
5. Meetings of the group shall open and close with a prayer of Saint Francis and contain some Franciscan input.
6. Members of the group shall be encouraged to become actively involved in service to their own civil and faith communities.

Article 18

Franciscan Youth (Youfra)

1. The local fraternity, following the guidance of the superior level, and in collaboration with the spiritual assistant, finds the best ways to promote the creation of a Franciscan Youth Fraternity.
2. The Franciscan Youth has its own statutes, organization and pedagogic methods of formation, appropriate to their own requirements (cf. GGCC 96.5)
3. The fraternity should organize gatherings with young Franciscans (OFS Rule 24).
4. To share their faith experience, the OFS fraternities and YouFra make joint efforts and work to provide the Franciscan charism, in the task of evangelization and in the vast field of temporal realities.
5. Each local fraternity appoints a suitable member for the support of the Franciscan Youth Fraternity as fraternal animator (cf. GGCC 97.2).
6. The OFS Council at every level appoints one of its members to be part of the YouFra Council of the same level and a member of the YouFra Council will be part of the OFS Council (cf. GGCC 97.4).

Article 19

Franciscan Children and Adolescents

OFS and YouFra fraternities endeavor to create groups of children and adolescents, educating them to a simple and joyful family life, at school and in their environments, and introduce them to the knowledge and love of San Francis and the Franciscan life (cf. GGCC 25).

TITLE 4: THE REGIONAL FRATERNITY

Article 20

Constitution

1. The constitution of regional fraternities is the responsibility of the national council.²⁰ For the establishment of a new regional fraternity a request is needed by a minimum of seven local fraternities.
2. A temporary council of five is chosen from the fraternity ministers in the new regional fraternity at the time of canonical establishment.
3. The first regional chapter shall be held within six months of establishment.

Article 21

1. The regional fraternity is animated and guided by a council and a minister.²¹
2. The governing bodies of the regional fraternity are:
 - The Chapter or Assembly
 - The Regional Council
 - The Minister

Article 22

The Regional Chapter - General Information

1. The regional chapter is the representative body of all the local fraternities existing in the respective area.
2. The regional chapter has deliberative and elective authority in the respective area.

Article 23 The Regional Chapter

1. The regional chapter is convoked at least twice a year. It is the representative organ of the local fraternities present within the territory of the regional fraternity
2. The regional elective chapter is convoked every three years.
3. Those who participate in the chapter are:
 - The members of the regional council.
 - The minister of each local fraternity or, in his/her absence, the vice minister, elected according to articles 76 - 80 of the General Constitutions or, if neither of them can participate, a delegate of the minister who must be a member of the fraternity council.
 - The members of the conference of regional spiritual assistants or, if it doesn't exist, the regional spiritual assistant is a member of the regional council, by right, according to Art. 21 of the Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the OFS.
 - The regional responsible of YouFra who, if he/she is a professed member of the OFS, has the right to vote.
4. All have a right to vote except that the regional spiritual assistants cannot vote in financial and elective matters, and the representative of YouFra only can vote if he/she is a professed member of the OFS.
5. Other ofs members of the regional fraternity are welcome to attend but only have a passive voice. Other persons designated by the regional council and approved by the regional council may also be present at regional council meetings but without voting rights.
6. The regional chapter shall:
 - a. examine and approve the report of the activities carried out by the regional council

- b. approve the report of the financial activity and that of the patrimony of regional fraternity
- c. elect the officers as specified and agreed by the regional chapter: minister, vice minister, treasurer, secretary, formator and additional councillors.

Article 24 The Regional Chapter – Who Presides

The regional chapter is presided over by the regional minister and, when it is elective, by the national minister or a delegated members of the national council.

Article 25 Procedure for the Elections

One of the National Spiritual Assistants or their delegate is to be present for the Regional Elective Chapter (GGCC 76.2; Statutes of Spiritual Assistants 19.3)

1. The national minister or his/her delegate presides at and confirms the election of each member of the regional council.
2. A secretary for the elections and two tellers are designated, from among the members of the chapter, by the president.
3. Nominations which have been received are made known to the assembly. Further nominations may be accepted. All permanently professed Secular Franciscans from the regional fraternity are eligible for election.
4. Councillors will be elected, office by office, commencing with the election of the minister, with due regard for eligibility as in the General Constitutions.
5. Voting will be by secret ballot and according to the directives of the General Constitutions.
6. The tellers will count the total number of ballot papers collected before opening and counting the votes for each respective candidate. The secretary records the figures and announces the result of the elections.
7. The president confirms the election according to the Ritual if all has been carried out properly and those elected have accepted their office.
8. At the completion of the Rite of Election, the record books of each out-going officer shall be handed over to the newly elected officer.

Article 26

The Regional Council

The composition and duties of the regional council are in accordance with Articles 62-64 of GGCC unless otherwise specified in these Statutes

Article 27

Regional Council Meetings

1. The regional minister shall call the regional council meeting at least 15 days prior to the date of the meeting. An agenda shall be provided
2. The regional council shall meet at least twice a year. At least 30 days' notice of a forthcoming meeting shall be given. An agenda shall be provided.
- 3 The quorum for all meetings of the regional council shall be more than one half of all its members.
4. The adoption of any resolutions requires the approval of an absolute majority of members present.

Article 28

The Composition of the Regional Council

1. The regional council is composed of the minister, vice-minister, secretary, treasurer and regional formator. If it is necessary for the life of the regional fraternity, other councillors may be elected with their own specific responsibilities, to a maximum number of eight.
2. The members of the conference of regional spiritual assistants or, if it doesn't exist, the regional spiritual assistant, is a member of the Regional Council, by right, according to Art. 21 of the Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the OFS as well as the regional responsible of YouFra who, if he/she is a professed member of the OFS, has the right to vote.

Article 29

Regional Formator

The duties of the regional formator are:

1. To be available to assist and animate local formators.
2. To hold regular meetings of local ministers and formators, at least once a year, with a view to sharing ideas and encouraging commitment, training and development of the skills necessary to provide effective initiation, initial and on-going formation.
3. To be aware of developments in content and presentation of suitable formation material.

Article 30

Duties and Responsibilities of the Regional Council

The regional council has specific responsibilities in accordance with 62.2 GGCC .

In addition, it is the responsibility of the regional council:

1. To encourage and promote useful collaboration between local fraternities within the region and with the other branches of the Franciscan Family.

2. To provide for the formation of ministers, formation ministers and all other secular leaders of the fraternities.
3. To distribute formation materials, which have been indicated by the national council, adapting them to the local situation as necessary.
4. To ensure the quality of the formation being provided by the local fraternities.
5. To promote the care of distanced members of the local fraternities.
6. To oversee the canonical establishment of emerging local fraternities.
7. To arrange, at the request of the local fraternity concerned and after obtaining the consent of the competent Major Superiors of the First Order, the transfer of a fraternity to the pastoral care of another Franciscan religious order as provided in Art 47.2 of GGCC

TITLE 5: THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY

The composition and duties of the national council are in accordance with Articles 65-68 of GGCC unless otherwise specified in these Statutes.

Governing bodies of the National Fraternity.

The governing bodies of the national fraternity are:

- The National Chapter or Assembly
- The National Council
- The Minister

Article 31

The National Chapter

1. The national chapter is the representative body of all the fraternities of England, Scotland and Wales (locally known as OFSGB)
2. The Chapter has legislative, deliberative and elective power in the area of the national fraternity.
3. The national elective chapter is convoked every three years. It is the duty of the national minister to convoke the National Elective Chapter, after listening to the National Council on the formalities of the convocation at least 60 days before the date of the meeting. The Minister General must be informed a sufficient time in advance (*if possible, six months in advance*),
4. It is the duty of the national minister, after listening to the Council, to convoke the ordinary national chapter at least 60 days before the date of the meeting, indicating the subjects to be dealt with. (*The schedule of the day*).
5. The National Assembly, in elective seat, has the name "National Elective Chapter".

Article 32

Composition of the National Chapter

The national chapter is made up of:

1. The members of the national council.
2. The minister of each regional council or the vice minister or, if neither of them can participate, a delegate of the minister who must be a member of the regional council.
3. The members of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (where available) or National Spiritual Assistant (cf. Statutes for Assistance 19)
4. other spiritual assistants may participate in the Chapter in accordance with procedures established by the national statutes (*See Statutes for Assistance 16.4*).
5. The president of the Franciscan Youth, if it exists in Great Britain.

Article 33

The Duties and Responsibilities of the National Chapter

In addition to the responsibilities attributed to it by the General Constitutions the national chapter has the duty:

1. To call and plan the meetings of the national chapter
2. To review and approve activities developed by the national council
3. To deliberate on the organisation, formation and animation of brothers and sisters in the national area
4. To meet at least twice a year in plenary session.
5. To set national policy and establish national programmes for fulfilling the aims and purposes of the national fraternity.
6. To establish new regional fraternities in Great Britain.
7. To establish the annual contribution of the regional fraternities

Article 34

The national council is the governing body of the national fraternity. The quorum for all meetings of the national council shall be more than one half of its members.

Article 35

Members of the National Council are:

1. The national minister/international councillor
2. The national vice- minister/substitute international councillor
3. The national secretary
4. The national treasurer

5. The national formation minister
6. A maximum of 3 additional councillors
7. The national spiritual assistants

Article 36

The Duties of the National Council are:

It performs the functions provided for in article 66.2 GG
CC In addition it has responsibility:

1. To call and plan the meetings of the national council.
2. To carry out the day-to-day activities and administration of the national chapter.
3. To implement policies and programs as directed by the national chapter
4. To meet in executive session at least twice a year.

Article 37 The National Minister

In addition to the duties indicated in the General Constitutions²³, the national minister shall represent the Secular Franciscan Order in all dealings with the National Conference of Franciscan Major Superiors of Great Britain.

The minister is the primary responsible of the national fraternity and exercises his/her office collegially with the council. He/she represents, for all purposes, the national fraternity and performs the functions provided for in article 67 of the General Constitutions. The minister ensures that the work of the various offices is carried out and that the income and expenses are distributed according to any instructions previously approved by the national council.

Article 38

The National Formation Minister

It is the duty of the national formation minister:

1. To assist and animate regional formation ministers.
2. To provide training events for regional ministers and regional formation ministers so that they may develop their own skills.
3. To provide formation material for initiation, initial and ongoing formation which has been approved by the national council.²⁴

Article 39

International Councillor and International Councillor Substitute

1. The national minister, once elected will assume, in his/her own right, the office of international councillor.
2. The national vice minister, once elected will assume, in his/ her own right, the office of international councillor substitute.

3. If the national minister is unable to accept this additional role of international councillor then the national vice minister shall be the international councillor.
4. If the national vice minister is unable to accept this additional role of international councillor then the chapter shall proceed to elect another international councillor who will have to be chosen from among the members of the national council.
5. If the national vice-minister has assumed the role of international councillor, as per point 3 above, or if the national vice minister is for another reason unable to accept the additional role of international councillor substitute, the international councillor substitute shall be elected by the chapter from among the members of the national council.

Article 40

The Duties of the International Councillor for Great Britain are:

1. To represent the national fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of Great Britain at all OFS General Chapters.
2. To keep the national council informed about the worldwide activities of the Secular Franciscan Order.
3. To act as an adviser on international affairs in the Secular Franciscan Order to the national council.
4. To be the ordinary channel of reciprocal communications between the national and international levels of fraternity.
5. To generate interest and elicit a response to the initiatives and undertakings promoted by the international council.

Article 41

The National Spiritual Assistants

The role of the national spiritual assistants is in accordance with Articles 85-91 of GGCC In addition to this:

It is the responsibility of the competent Major Superiors to make provision for the spiritual assistance, pastoral care and oversight of the Secular Franciscan Order, Great Britain (cf. GGCC 47.1, GGCC 89.1, Statutes of Spiritual Assistance 5.1-3). The spiritual assistant should be a Franciscan religious, member of the First Order or the TOR. (GGCC 89.3) The provincial Minister and the other major superiors assure spiritual assistance to the local fraternities entrusted to their own jurisdiction. (GGCC 88.1, Statutes of Spiritual Assistance 11.1)

- 1 Each national spiritual assistant is the person designated by the competent Major Superior to carry out this service for the national fraternity of Great Britain. (GGCC 89.2)
- 2 In the event of unforeseen circumstances which prevent the spiritual assistant meeting a commitment already made, he may delegate another friar or another in clerical office to deputise for him. (GGCC 89.4, Statutes of Spiritual Assistance 15.4)

- 3 National spiritual assistants are by right a member of the council and the chapter of the national fraternity to which he gives assistance and collaborates with it in all activities. (GGCC 90.2, Statutes of Spiritual Assistance 16.1)

- 4 In the exercise of their office, the national assistants are mandated to:
 - Make regional pastoral visits,
 - give spiritual guidance
 - see to the spiritual assistance to the OFS in Great Britain and to the co-ordination of all the regional spiritual assistants (GGCC 90.3b) or otherwise according to the provisions of art 15.4 of the current statute for spiritual and pastoral assistance to the OFS
 - witness the election of regional and local ministers and councillors where the local fraternities are directly under the National Fraternity
 - preside at professions
 - participate on the national council
 - contribute to and co-operate in initiation, initial and ongoing formation and advise concerning developments in the national formation programme (GGCC 90.1, Statutes of Spiritual Assistance 13.1)
 - whenever possible assist at regional days, formation gatherings, retreats and other national or regional events.

- 6 Financial Support
 - (i) The expenses incurred by a spiritual assistant are reimbursed by the fraternity which has requested their services. Expenses are to cover the costs of travel and accommodation.
 - (ii) According to means, stipends are given for specific services given to the fraternity. The amount is agreed by the council to which the spiritual assistant has been requested to attend, local, regional or national.

7. The services of a local spiritual assistant may be provided by a Franciscan religious sister, TOR or OSC, where a local fraternity is located near a Franciscan religious community, Second Order, or Third Order Regular (GGCC 89.4. Statutes of Spiritual Assistance 15.4).

THE ELECTION OF NATIONAL OFFICES

Article 42

The National Electoral Chapter

1. The national chapter is called every three years and is the representative organ of the Secular Franciscan Order in Great Britain.
2. Those who participate in the chapter are: (a) The national council (b) The president of Franciscan Youth if it exists in Great Britain. (c) A delegate elected by each regional council. (d) The national spiritual assistants, who do not have the right to vote on financial matters and in the elective session of the Chapter.
3. All other non-voting participants may have the right to speak during the chapter at the discretion of the president of the chapter.

4. The national chapter shall:
 - a. examine and approve the report of the activities carried out by the national council.
 - b. approve the report of the financial activity and that of the patrimony of the national fraternity.
 - c. elect a minister, vice minister, secretary, treasurer, formation minister, a maximum of three additional councillors, as agreed by the national electoral chapter and the international councillor and substitute international councillor in accordance with article 39.
5. The national minister will preside over the non-elective part of the chapter. The elective session of the national chapter is presided over by the Minister General or his/her delegate.
6. The national minister, having heard the national council on the formalities of the convocation, will set a date in agreement with the Minister General and the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants, and shall call the chapter sending out notice of it at least six months in advance of the meeting.
7. Should any specific problem arise which requires an immediate attention and decisions, to be taken in the context of a national chapter, the national council may call for an extraordinary national chapter. The convocation will be made following the same rules as for any regular national chapter.

Article 43

Procedure to Follow During the National Chapters

The work of the chapter will be accomplished in groups and in general sessions after hearing the reports of the national minister, the national treasurer, the national formation minister and the national spiritual assistants. There will be time for questions immediately following these reports.

1. The procedure for the group work will be as follows:
 - a. To choose a leader and a secretary.
 - b. Keeping within the allotted time, the leader regulates the interventions according to the general interest; gives permission for each one to speak in turn; concludes discussion on each point; to pass on to the next, and allows time for the group to approve or amend the secretary's report.
 - c. The secretary records objectively and impartially the discussions of the group. He/she prepares it in concise form with conclusions for presentation verbally and in writing in the general session.
2. The groups' purpose is to identify what should be the priorities for the next three-year term and the desirable qualities of those elected to serve.
3. The procedure for the general sessions will be as follows:

- a. Discussion of any proposal put forward by members of the national executive council and vote.
- b. Discussion of and vote on points presented by any member in writing and seconded by a quarter of the capitulate.
- c. Discussion and vote on the priorities recommended by the groups.
- d. No participant will be permitted to speak more than twice on the same point.

Article 44

Procedure for the Elections

1. The Minister General or his/her delegate presides at and confirms the election of each member of the national council.
2. A secretary for the elections and two tellers are designated, from among the members of the Chapter, by the President.
3. Nominations which have been received are made known to the assembly. Further nominations may be accepted. All permanently professed Secular Franciscans are eligible for election.
4. Councillors will be elected, office by office, commencing with the election of the minister, with due regard for eligibility as in the General Constitutions.
5. Voting will be by secret ballot and according to the directives of the General Constitutions.
6. The tellers will count the total number of ballot papers collected before opening and counting the votes for each respective candidate. The secretary records the figures and announces
7. Each candidate elected accepts his/her office and the President of the elections confirms the election.
8. At the completion of the Rite of Election, the record books of each out-going Officer shall be handed over to the newly elected Officer
9. The same norms for election²⁵ and terms of office²⁶ shall be followed at regional and local fraternity level.

Article 45

In the Case of Vacancy between Elective Chapters²⁷

The replacement of Minister and Vice Minister will be made in accordance with art 81.1 and 81.2 of the GGCC.

The substitute councillor will be chosen by the local fraternity council or regional or national council from among the professed members of the corresponding fraternity by secret ballot and will have the same rights and duties as the elected councillors until the next election.

TITLE 6: FRATERNAL AND PASTORAL VISITS

Article 46

Fraternal Visits

1. The local minister with the consent of the local fraternity council shall request a Fraternal Visit from the regional minister at least once every three years.
2. The regional minister with the consent of the regional council shall request a Fraternal Visit from the national minister at least once every three years.
3. The national minister, with the consent of the national council, shall request a visit from the Minister General to the national fraternity at least once every six years.

Article 47

Pastoral Visits

1. The local minister with the consent of the local fraternity council shall request a Pastoral Visit from the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants at least every three years.
2. The regional minister with the consent of the regional council shall request from the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants a Pastoral Visit at least every three years.
3. The national council shall request a Pastoral Visit from the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants at least every six years.

TITLE 7: PATRIMONY

Article 48

Refer also to Article 14

The patrimony of the fraternities at all levels comprises:

1. Contributions given by its own members.
2. The balance remaining at the end of the fiscal year from the financial accounts of the fraternity.
3. Any goods or property and real estate which has become the property of the fraternity through acquisition, inheritance, gift or transfer of whatever kind.
4. The financial period shall have its beginning on 1st January and shall terminate at 31st December each year.
5. At the end of each year the treasurer of the fraternity at each level is to prepare a Statement of Accounts which shall then be approved by the council of the respective fraternity.
6. At the beginning of each triennium an inventory of the goods of the fraternity shall be carried out and shall be reviewed periodically. When a local, regional or national fraternity becomes extinct or is closed, its goods shall pass to the fraternity of the next higher level.

Article 49

The national council of Great Britain shall be entitled to amend or change these Statutes by a two thirds majority of electors present, subject to the approval of the International Presidency of the Secular Franciscan Order. The revised Statutes will become executive within one year of promulgation by the national minister.

1. OFS Rule 2
2. OFS Rule 1
3. OFS Rule 26
4. Ibid.
5. OFS Rule 1
6. OFS Rule 4
7. OFS Rule 3
8. OFS Rule 2
9. OFS Rule 20
10. Gen. Const. Art 1:5 & OFS Rule 20
11. OFS Rule 22
12. Ibid.
13. OFS Rule 20
14. Gen. Const. Art 38
15. Gen. Const. Art 39
16. OFS Rule 25
17. Gen. Const. Art 34
18. Gen. Const. Art 103
19. Ibid.
20. Gen. Const. Art 61:2
21. Gen. Const. Art 61:3-64
22. Gen. Const. Art 66
23. Gen. Const. Art 67:2
24. Gen. Const. Art. 25 c
25. Gen. Const. Art 78
26. Gen. Const. Art 79
27. Gen. Const. Art 81:3