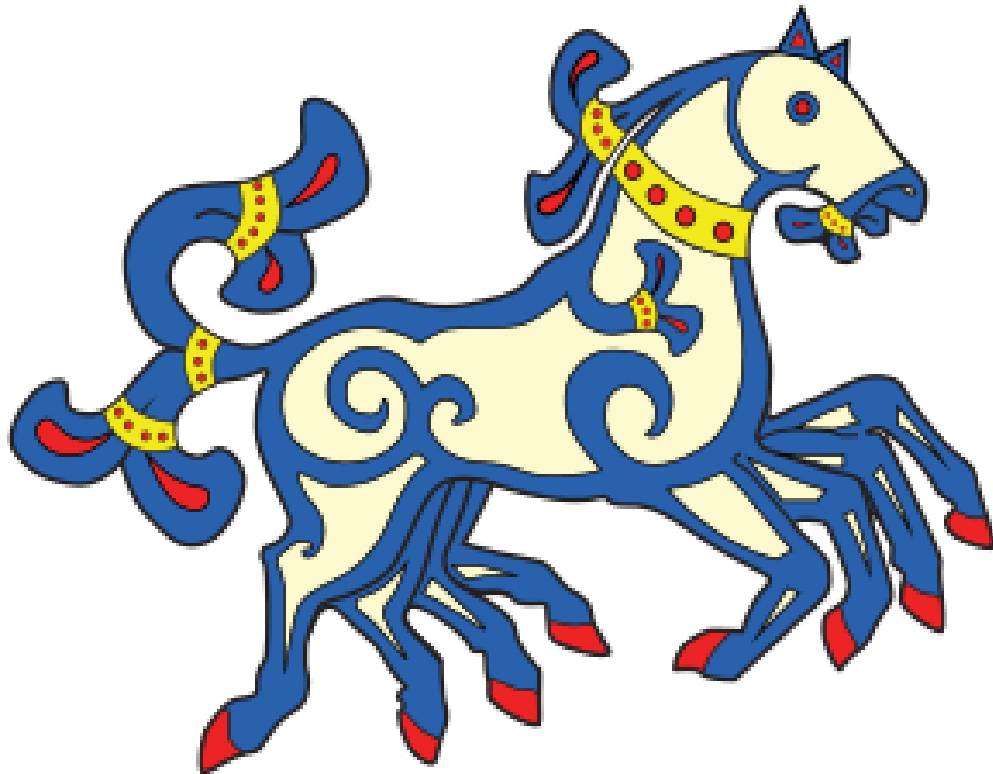


British Columbia Heathen Freehold



By-Laws

As approved, this 7th day of August 2020 CE

Section 1: Statement of purpose

The British Columbia Heathen Freehold (herein after referred to as the Freehold) is a federation of independent kindreds, hearths, and individuals seeking to cooperate for the advancement of Germanic Pre-Christian beliefs and religion (herein after referred to as Heathenry); the performance of necessary religious rites pertaining thereto; and achieve the authority to sanctify and perform legally binding Marriages in the Province of British Columbia.

The Freehold will neither support nor tolerate the use of Heathen belief, lore or symbols to promote racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or ableism. The Heathen Freehold is a frithful community that holds sacred the principals of the equality of all people, and will never allow race, gender, affectional preference, or physical ability to affect eligibility for membership, election, or treatment within the Freehold, unless a given physical disability precludes the performance of a specific titled position's duty where alternatives are not practical.

Section 2: Membership in the Freehold

Article 1: Categories of Membership

2.1.1 Wita:

- a) Wita is the singular and Witan is the plural, referring to the Officers of the Freehold.
- b) Elected at Althing, Council Meeting, or Kindred Moot as appropriate.
- c) There shall be a minimum of 5 Witan including:
 - i) the Ombudsman of the Freehold;
 - ii) the Goðar of the Established Kindreds;
 - iii) the Keeper of the Council of Guilds; and
 - iv) respected elders who shall be titled Thaners.
- d) Witan must have attained the age of eighteen prior to being elected to hold office.
- e) Each Wita must complete a Police Information Check and a Vulnerable Sector Screening, as leaders and officers of a religious community with minors and other vulnerable members.
- f) They have one vote in all meetings of the Freehold and may run for election as Freyr/Freya.

2.1.2 Full Member:

- a) Full Members of the Freehold who have completed at least one year as a Probationary Member, have been approved by a 75% vote at an Althing, and have sworn the Freehold Oath.
- b) Full Members must have attained the age of sixteen prior to being accepted at an Althing.
- c) They have a vote in all meetings of the society; may apply for membership in any guild; and may run for election at Althing, Council Meeting, or Kindred Moot.

2.1.3 Probationary Member:

- a) A Probationary Member is one who has sworn an oath of troth to the gods but has not yet been accepted as a Member at an Althing.
- b) Probationary Members must be sponsored by a Full Member.
- c) If a Probationary Member does not have a sponsor the Goði/Gyðia of their Kindred will be deemed to be their sponsor. If a Probationary Member is not part of a Kindred, or if their Kindred has dissolved, the Freyr/Freya shall act as their sponsor.
- d) Probationary Members must have attained the age of twelve before being sponsored.
- e) They have a vote in all meetings of the society except the approval of Probationary Members becoming Full Members.

2.1.4 Friend of the Freehold:

- a) Friends of the Freehold have sworn no oaths to the Freehold and pay no dues;
- b) they have no vote in meetings of the Freehold;
- c) they have been sponsored by a Full Member;
- d) they have attained the age of twelve before being sponsored; and
- e) they wish to be kept informed of Freehold events and information.

Article 2: Revocation and resignation of membership

2.2.1 Revocation of Membership:

- a) The Freyr/Freya will immediately revoke the membership of any member who is convicted of a crime with victims or against the Freehold;
- b) An Althing may revoke the membership of any member who fails to abide by Freehold Law;
- c) Upon revocation of membership the member's name shall be stricken from the record of members, dues will not be refunded, and reinstatement will require a unanimous decision by the total membership.

2.2.2 Resignation of Membership:

- a) Any member may resign their membership in the Freehold at any time in writing to the Freyr/Freya, Clerk, or Goði/Gyðia of their Kindred if applicable.
- b) Upon resignation of membership their name will be removed from the roster of members, dues will not be refunded, if reinstatement does not occur within three years from the date of their resignation, they must reapply as new applicants.

Article 3: Order of Precedence

2.3.1 Witan:

- a) Freyr/Freya;
- b) Jarl;
- c) Goðar by order of Kindred Founding;
- d) Keeper of the Council of Guilds;
- e) Ombudsman; and
- f) Thaners by date of Wita's Oath.

2.3.2 Members:

- a) Leaders of Provisional Kindreds, by order of Kindred Founding;
- b) Housecarls by order of Kindred Founding;
- c) Full Members by date of Oath; and
- d) Probationary Members by date of Oath.

Section 3: Officers of the Freehold

Article 1: Freyr/Freya

3.1.1 This title can reflect the gender identity and cultural focus of the office holder.

3.1.2 Duties of the Freyr/Freya shall include:

- a) presiding at all meetings of the Witangemot and Althing;
- b) being the Sacral Luck-holder of the Freehold;
- c) being the chief priest of the Freehold; and
- d) any other duties assigned by the Witangemot;
- e) as necessary the Freyr/Freya may delegate any or all of these duties on a temporary basis.

3.1.3 Election of the Freyr/Freya:

- a) To be eligible for election the candidate must be a Wita of the Freehold.
- b) The Freyr/Freya shall be elected by the Witan at Althing.
- c) The term of office for Freyr/Freya is three years, there are no limitations to re-election.

Article 2: Jarl

3.2.1 This title can reflect the cultural focus of the office holder.

3.2.2 Duties of the Jarl shall include:

- a) standing in for the Freyr/Freya when required due to illness or temporary incapacity;
- b) succeeding the Freyr/Freya in the event of permanent incapacity, death, or removal.
- c) other duties as delegated by the Freyr/Freya.

3.2.3 Appointment of the Jarl:

- a) To be eligible for appointment the candidate must be a Wita in good standing.
- b) The Jarl shall be nominated by the Freyr/Freya and confirmed by the Witan at Althing.

Article 3: Ombudsman

3.3.1 The duties of the Ombudsman shall include:

- a) acting as an ambassador among the Witan for the membership;
- b) answering new members' enquiries;
- c) representing members who do not belong to a Guild or Kindred; and
- d) coordinate mediation of member disputes.

3.3.2 The Ombudsman shall be elected by a plurality of votes at Althing.

3.3.3 The term of office for the Ombudsman shall be from the Althing of their election until the next; there are no limitations to re-election.

Article 4: Thaners of the Freehold

3.4.1 Thaners are elders of the Freehold elected to serve as wise advisors to the officers.

3.4.2 Election of Thaners

- a) Each Althing up to three members may be nominated for election as Thaners;
- b) Each candidate is elected independently of any others;
- c) Any candidate receiving a majority approval shall become a Thane;
- d) It is not necessary to elect any Thaners at an Althing.

3.4.3 Thaners are elected for life and serve on the Witangemot so long as they are Members.

Article 5: Trusteeship

3.5.1 The Freyr/Freya and two other Witan shall be the trustees of the Freehold.

3.5.2 The Trustees shall be empowered to conduct business, enter into contracts, and represent the Freehold in all matters furthering the Freehold and its stated goals.

3.5.3 The Trustees may with approval of 75% of the voting membership borrow funds and establish a scheme of repayment to the lender, should the membership and trustees be convinced that it is necessary to obtain these funds for the purposes of the Freehold.

Article 6: Removal from Office

3.6.1 Any Officer may be removed from office in the following circumstances:

- a) a petition signed by 75% of all voting members of the Freehold;
- b) a majority vote of non-confidence at an Althing; or
- c) a unanimous vote by the Witangemot.

Article 7: Non-Director Officers of the Freehold

3.7.1 Serve purely administrative roles and handle routine operations of the Freehold.

3.7.2 Offices shall be established, amended, and abolished by the Witangemot through policies; with the Althing having the option to overrule the decision of the Witan.

3.7.3 Non-Director Officers are appointed by the Freyr/Freya and confirmed by the Witangemot.

3.7.4 Non-Director Officers serve at the pleasure of the Freyr/Freya, with no term limits.

3.7.5 Non-Director Officers must provide a completed Police Information Check and Vulnerable Sector Screening, costs will be reimbursed by the Freehold.

Section 4: Kindreds

Article 1: General

4.1.1 Kindreds are local congregations of the Freehold that are responsible to perform rituals and advocate the general study of Heathenry in their local area: each Kindred may choose to focus on a specific Germanic culture such as Norse, Anglo-Saxon, Frankish, etc.

4.1.2 Membership in a Kindred:

- a) each Kindred may set policies on how members join, ensuring that Kindred members meet the requirements for Freehold membership (i.e. inclusivity & age);
- b) a Kindred may have members who are not members of the Freehold;
- c) if an individual is denied Kindred membership, they may appeal to the Witangemot.

Article 2: Provisional Kindreds

4.2.1 Provisional Kindreds are in the process of forming a functional local Heathen community capable of performing ritual, education, and outreach.

4.2.2 Leader of the Provisional Kindred

- a) The duties of a leader shall include:
 - i) presiding at all meetings of the Kindred moot;
 - ii) being the sacral luck-holder of the Kindred;
 - iii) as necessary the leader may delegate any or all of these duties on a temporary basis to a qualified alternate.
- b) Election of the Leader:
 - i) To be eligible for election the candidate must be a Member of the Freehold and have completed the Introduction to Freehold Heathenry course or a recognised equivalent.
 - ii) The Leader shall be elected by a Plurality of votes at a Kindred Moot.
 - iii) The term of office for Leader is one year, there are no limitations to re-election.

4.2.3 Establishment of a Provisional Kindred:

- a) Requirements to establish a Provisional Kindred of the Freehold:
 - i) at least three members, one of them must be a Freehold member;
 - ii) plan to conduct at least three Blots/Fainings a year;
 - iii) have a tentative name for the Kindred; and
 - iv) petition the Witangemot for formal recognition.
- b) The Witangemot must approve the establishment of a Provisional Kindred with a 60% majority.

Article 3: Established Kindreds

4.3.1 Established Kindreds are fully functioning congregations of the Freehold that are able to effectively engage in ritual, education, and outreach in their local community.

4.3.2 Goði/Gyðia:

- a) This title can reflect the gender identity and cultural focus of the office holder or Kindred.
- b) The duties of a Goði/Gyðia shall include:
 - i) presiding at all meetings of the Kindred moot;
 - ii) being the sacral luck-holder of the Kindred;
 - iii) being a priest of the Freehold;
 - iv) as necessary the Goði/Gyðia may delegate any or all of these duties on a temporary basis to a qualified alternate.
- c) The Goði/Gyðia can perform marriages for Kindred members and others;
- d) Election of the Goði/Gyðia:
 - i) To be eligible for election the candidate must be a Full Member of the Freehold and have completed the Freehold Liturgist Program or a recognised equivalent.
 - ii) The Goði/Gyðia shall be elected by a Plurality of votes at a Kindred Moot.
 - iii) The term of office for Goði/Gyðia is three years, there are no limitations to re-election.

4.3.3 Housecarl:

- a) a Housecarl may be appointed by the Goði/Gyðia and approved by the Kindred moot;
- b) the Housecarl assists the Goði/Gyðia in performing their duties;
- c) if the Goði/Gyðia is also Freyr/Freya of the Freehold, then a Housecarl must be appointed.

4.3.4 Advancement to Established Kindred status:

- a) An Established Kindred of the Freehold must:
 - i) have at least seven members, three of those must be Freehold members;
 - ii) conduct at least three Blots/Fainings annually for Kindred members and guests;
 - iii) establish thews for the Kindred;
 - iv) agree on a name for the Kindred; and
 - v) petition the Althing for formal recognition.
- b) The Althing must approve the advancement to Established Kindred status with a 60% majority.

Article 4: Dissolution of a Kindred

4.4.1 Dissolution of a Kindred can occur for these reasons:

- a) inactivity of the Kindred;
- b) insufficient membership; and
- c) violation of Freehold Law.

4.4.2 The authority to dissolve a Kindred rests with the Witangemot for provisional Kindreds or the Althing for Established Kindreds.

4.4.3 An Established Kindred may revert to a Provisional Kindred, rather than be dissolved if it still meets those requirements.

4.4.4 Dissolved Kindreds may continue to function as a Kindred outside of the Freehold.

4.4.5 Upon the dissolution of a Kindred, all Kindred assets shall revert to the people that donated them, except those supplied by the Freehold.

Section 5: Guilds of the Freehold

Article 1: Council of Guilds

5.1.1 The Council of Guilds is responsible for the administration and organisation of the guilds of the Freehold.

5.1.2 Keeper of the Council of Guilds:

- a) the Keeper will be elected:
 - i) by a Plurality of votes at a council meeting;
 - ii) for a term of one to three years as determined by the council;
 - iii) there is no limit on the number of terms a Keeper may serve.
- b) ensure that guild activities are in keeping with Freehold Law and Custom; and
- c) supervise the performance of the Council of Guilds' duties as listed below.

5.1.3 The Council of Guilds is responsible for:

- a) the practice of traditional crafts on behalf of the Freehold;
- b) the approval of guild study programs; and
- c) the establishment of guilds and halls of the Freehold for the advancement of knowledge and deeper understanding of how the ancient heathens lived.

5.1.4 Members of the Council of Guilds:

- a) Voting Members:
 - i) The Freyr/Freya; and
 - ii) Drightens of the guilds.
- b) Non-Voting Members:
 - i) Gesithas of the halls within the guilds; and
 - ii) Experts to advise on issues of importance.

5.1.5 Each member holds the highest status to which they are entitled.

Article 2: Guilds

5.2.1 The purpose of a guild is to study and practice skills that are ancient or beneficial to the Freehold; train others to use these skills; and perform their skills for the benefit of the Freehold at large, the Kindreds in particular, or individuals in need of assistance.

5.2.2 Drighten of a guild:

- a) Each guild will elect a Drighten, from amongst the Gesithas if any, to lead their guild;
- b) the Drighten will be elected
 - i) by a plurality of votes at a guild meeting;
 - ii) for a term of one to three years as determined by the guild; and
 - iii) there is no limit on the number of terms a Drighten may serve.

5.2.3 Membership of a guild:

- a) any Freehold member may apply to join any guild;
- b) should a request be denied by the guild the applicant can appeal to the Witangemot;
- c) a guild may charge a reasonable fee for membership if approved by the membership of the guild, so long as a portion is paid to the Freehold account as negotiated between the Witangemot and the guild.

5.2.4 Founding of a guild:

- a) A guild may be founded by any three or more Freehold members;
- b) The application must be submitted to and approved by the Council of Guilds.

Article 3: Halls within a Guild:

5.3.1 A hall will focus on a specialised subject; halls are not a local division of the guild.

5.3.2 Gesith of a hall

- a) The hall will elect a Gesith from amongst the hall members:
 - i) by a plurality of votes at a hall meeting;
 - ii) for a term of one to three years as determined by the hall; and
 - iii) there is no limit on the number of terms a Gesith may serve.

5.3.3 Membership of the hall:

- a) Any guild member may apply to join any hall within the guild;
- b) should a request be denied by the hall the applicant can appeal to the guild Drighten.

5.3.4 Founding a hall:

- a) A hall may be founded by any three or more guild members;
- b) The application must be submitted to and approved by the Council of Guilds.

Article 4: Business Activities of a Guild or Hall:

5.4.1 Any guild or hall may conduct business on behalf of and in the name of the Freehold or a Kindred so long as approval of the Freyr/Freya or appropriate Goði/Gyðia is attained;

5.4.2 A portion of these revenues will be paid into the Freehold or Kindred treasury as negotiated between the Freehold or Kindred and the guild or hall.

Article 5: Guilds on Inactive Status:

5.5.1 Any Guild that has not conducted any teaching, business, or other activities for a period of more than one year, may be on inactive status by a simple majority vote of either the Council of Guilds or the Althing of the Freehold.

5.5.2 All records, and non-financial resources of the guild shall be placed into the custody of the Keeper of the Council of Guilds and held in trust until reactivation of the guild.

5.5.3 Guilds on inactive status can be reactivated by three or more members of the Freehold asking permission from the Council of Guilds and choosing a Drihten from amongst themselves.

Section 6: Meetings of the Freehold

Article 1: Althing:

- 6.1.1 An Althing is defined as a General Meeting of the Freehold.
- 6.1.2 An Annual Althing must be held within fifteen months of the preceding Annual Althing.
- 6.1.3 A Special Althing may be convened by a simple majority of the Witangemot to resolve urgent business that is beyond the Witangemot's authority.
- 6.1.4 An Althing will be held in the time and place determined by the Witangemot.
- 6.1.5 Notice must be put forth no less than two weeks before the intended date.
- 6.1.6 Voting is restricted to Members of the Freehold.
- 6.1.7 Quorum for an Althing shall be one Trustee and two additional members.

Article 2: Witangemot

- 6.2.1 The Witangemot is comprised of the Witan of the Freehold and is the board of directors for the Freehold; it has administrative and religious oversight for all Freehold activities. The Witangemot must maintain at least five members.
- 6.2.2 The administrative duties of the Witangemot include:
 - a) advising the Freyr on routine and emergency matters;
 - b) setting of Freehold policies to amplify and clarify the by-laws;
 - c) oversight of Freehold Councils and Kindreds; and
 - d) acceptance of Probationary Members and Provisional Kindreds.
- 6.2.3 The Witangemot has the following religious responsibilities:
 - a) ensuring that public ritual is performed on behalf of the Freehold;
 - b) the maintenance of the Freehold's religious calendar;
 - c) safekeeping of the Freehold's Oath Ring and other holy artefacts; and
 - d) the establishment of rituals celebrating life events for members of the Freehold and other Heathens in our community including weddings, baby-namings, funerals, and other rites of passage.
- 6.2.4 Quorum for a Witangemot shall be the Freyr/Freya and two other Witan.
- 6.2.5 A Witangemot may be convened by the Freyr/Freya or a simple majority of Witan.
- 6.2.6 Each Wita of the Freehold has only one vote to cast regardless of the number of offices held, except the Freyr/Freya who may cast a tie-breaking vote.

Article 3: Sub-group Meetings

6.3.1 Kindred Moot:

- a) A moot is defined as a meeting of a Kindred of the Freehold to conduct the business of the Kindred.
- b) A moot may be convened by the Goði/Gyðia/Leader or any two members of the Kindred.
- c) A moot must be held within 15 months of the establishment of a Kindred and within 15 months from the previous one there after.
- d) Notice must be put forth no less than two weeks before the intended date.
- e) Voting is restricted to Kindred members, regardless of Freehold membership.

6.3.2 Council Meeting:

- a) A council meeting is defined as a meeting of a council of the Freehold to conduct the business of the council.
- b) A meeting may be convened by the keeper or any two members of the council.
- c) A meeting must be held within 15 months of the previous one.
- d) Notice must be put forth no less than two weeks before the intended date.
- e) Voting is restricted to members of the council.

6.3.3 Guild Meeting:

- a) A guild meeting is defined as a meeting of a guild of the Freehold to conduct the business of the guild.
- b) A meeting may be convened by the Drighten or any two members of the guild.
- c) A meeting must be held within 15 months of the establishment of a guild and within 15 months from the previous one thereafter.
- d) Notice must be put forth no less than two weeks before the intended date.
- e) Voting is restricted to members of the guild

6.3.4 Hall Meeting:

- a) A hall meeting is defined as a meeting of a hall of a Freehold guild to conduct the business of the hall.
- b) A meeting may be convened by the Gesith or any two members of the hall.
- c) A meeting must be held within 15 months of the establishment of a hall and within 15 months from the previous one thereafter.
- d) Notice must be put forth no less than two weeks before the intended date.
- e) Voting is restricted to members of the hall.

6.3.5 Quorum:

- a) Quorum for a moot or meeting shall be the chair and two voting members.
- b) The council, guild, hall, or Kindred may set higher requirements for quorum.

Article 4: Voting

6.4.1 If a member entitled to vote is unable to attend a moot, meeting, or Althing:

- a) votes may be cast in writing regarding any matters that are on the agenda;
- b) they may also be cast by proxy with a written agreement held by the proxy and submitted to the Witan in attendance;
- c) proxies remain in effect at a reconvening of an adjourned meeting.

Article 5: Adjournment

6.5.1 If quorum is not met or a meeting is unable to proceed for any reason the meeting may be adjourned for not more than four weeks.

6.5.2 If the meeting is still unable to proceed after the second meeting a new call to business must be issued to convene a new meeting.

Article 6: Electronic Meetings

6.6.1 Official meetings of the Freehold or any of its sub-groups may be conducted via forum, videoconferencing, e-mail list, or any other electronic media as agreed to by the membership.

6.6.2 These electronic meetings, Althings, and moots will be considered equally valid to a physical gathering of the membership.

6.6.3 A meeting may be a combination of electronic and physical gathering, allowing those who are unable to attend in person to participate in the discussion and resolutions of the meeting as they happen.

Section 7: Administration

Article 1: Religious Representatives

7.1.1 The Governing Authority as defined by the Vital Statistics Agency shall be the Freyr/Freya.

7.1.2 The Signing Authority as defined by the Vital Statistics Agency shall be the Freyr/Freya.

7.1.3 The Religious Representatives as defined by the Vital Statistics Agency shall be the Goðar of Established Kindreds and the Freyr/Freya.

7.1.4 Non-members may have a Freehold Wedding with approval from the Witangemot.

Article 2: Affiliation with the Troth

7.2.1 The Troth is an international organization of Inclusive Heathens, to which the Freehold has become Affiliated joining our luck and maintaining our sovereignty.

Article 3: Freehold Seals

7.3.1 The Witan may provide a common seal for the Freehold and may destroy a seal and substitute a new seal in its place.

7.3.2 The Common Seal may only be affixed only by resolution of the trustees except:

- a) when a new Wita or Freeholder's oath is accepted by the Althing the Freyr/Freya may impress the Seal upon the oath document; or
- b) once approval has been received on any amendment to Freehold Law, the Freyr/Freya shall impress the Seal on the facing page of a bound copy of current Freehold Law as resolved and approved.

7.3.3 The Witan may provide a Seal specific to any Guild or Kindred and destroy and replace it on request from the Goði/Gyðia or Drighten of the Guild or Kindred.

- a) The Witan may recall a Guild or Kindred Seal if it has been deemed to be unused or used for a manner inconsistent with the By-laws
- b) A Guild Drighten may affix the Guild Seal to any certificate, correspondence, resolutions, or thews of the guild.
- c) A Goði/Gyðia may affix the Kindred Seal on official documents of the Kindred.

Article 4: By-laws

7.4.1 A copy of the By-laws shall be made available to all members of the Freehold.

7.4.2 The by-laws may be altered by:

- a) a simple majority of all voting members of the Freehold gathered in Althing;
- b) in due consideration of Freehold custom and tradition.

Article 5: Conduct

- 7.5.1 Every member shall strive to maintain the sacred oaths sworn in the course of fulfilling the Freehold's purposes.
- 7.5.2 No person in fulfilling the Freehold's purposes shall knowingly contravene Freehold by-laws or applicable Provincial or Federal laws.
- 7.5.3 No member may profit in the course of executing the Freehold's purposes, and any profits or other accretions to the Freehold shall be used solely to promote its objectives.

Article 6: Privacy Policies

- 7.6.1 The Freehold will treat membership information as absolutely confidential and will not share it with anyone without each member's prior consent except as required by law.
- 7.6.2 Freehold Witan will swear an oath, as per Appendix A, prior to or upon taking charge of any membership or other records, to protect the privacy and respect the wishes of all members in regard to access to information about them, to the full extent of the law.

Article 7: Social Media

- 7.7.1 The Witangemot shall appoint a qualified volunteer to be the Freehold Webmaster; the Webmaster will have responsibility for the administration of the Freehold websites and social media outreach.
- 7.7.2 The Webmaster may appoint assistants with the necessary skills and experience to aid in the administration of Freehold online forums and social media groups, pages, and communities.
- 7.7.3 The Webmaster is a non-director officer.
- 7.7.4 The Freyr/Freya, in consultation with the Witangemot, will be responsible for establishing guidelines on the appropriate uses and access policies of social media groups.

Article 8: Winding Up & Dissolution

7.8.1 Prior to the winding up and dissolution of the Freehold, a final financial statement and an asset inventory will be conducted:

- a) any Sacred artefacts of the Freehold shall be returned to the craftsman who produced it;
- b) all other assets, properties, or other holdings shall be auctioned to Freehold members first, and then to the public if no Freeholder bids.

7.8.2 All funds in Freehold accounts or received from the auctioning of assets shall be applied to any debts or obligations of the Freehold.

7.8.3 Any funds remaining after the repayment of debts shall be donated to the Troth if still an affiliate in good standing, or a charity that advocates for the benefit of Heathenry in British Columbia or Canada.

7.8.4 Dissolution of a Body within the Freehold

- a) A Council, Guild, or Hall may be dissolved by a 75% vote or petition from the members, a 60% vote at an Althing, a unanimous vote of the Witangemot, or if the membership falls beneath three voting members;
- b) Upon dissolution, all assets, funds, and properties shall revert to the Freehold or Parent Guild as appropriate.

Appendices

Appendix A: Oaths:

Article 1: Freeholder's Oath

- A.1.1. To become a Full Member or Provisional Member the following oath should be sworn, if possible, in the presence of a Wita of the Freehold or two Full Members.
- A.1.2. The oath may include additional points and may be printed and signed by the new Freeholder, and then mailed to the Witan care of the Freehold's current mailing address.
- A.1.3. The Freeholder's signature will be considered as seriously as a properly witnessed holy oath.
- A.1.4. OATH:

I, (name of member) swear to abide by Freehold law and custom at Freehold events.

Article 2: Witan Oath:

A.2.1. Where possible, the Freyr/Freya shall act as the host, as described below, or in his or her absence the highest ranking or most senior Wita present.

A.2.2. In the event that the Witan cannot convene to witness a new Wita's Oath, the Wita may fulfil the swearing of this Oath in writing, on a document bearing his or her signature.

A.2.3. OATH:

Host: With fulls and bedes, the Host makes known all gods, ancestors, honoured fallen, landvaetr, elves and other wights who are to act as witnesses, along with the folk, to the swearing of the oath.

Wita: The oath begins where the newly elected Wita introduces the self and brags of his or her accomplishments or merits, and why he or she should be believed in the swearing of it.

Challenge: Another party challenges the Wita, asking if they are really up to the job, or raising any issues from the past which may threaten to upset the frith of the Freehold if they are not addressed. (This may be purely symbolic, or it may represent some legitimate concerns, but it is important this tradition be observed.)

Wita: The Wita addresses raised concerns, and counters with a boast about what he or she has done to right the wyrd which may have been upset as a result of past actions, if there is a valid grievance, and how reparations have been made.

Host: Expresses his or her satisfaction at the explanation, or rejection of the candidate.

Wita: Lays down all weapons at the altar. Before the altar, laying the strong hand upon the ring and decries: Before the Folk of the Freehold, and before the gods of my people, before the ancestors, and all here bearing me witness: I, [name], son / daughter of [name], brother / sister of [name], from the Kindred of [Kindred] in the land of [place], lay my strong hand, as has ever been done, upon this sacred Ring, and swear to you, the folk of the Freehold, this solemn oath. By (names of Germanic god[s] sacred to the Wita) I swear my troth to the gods, to hold them and their gifts first, before all else, whether all fall fair or foul. And I further swear to abide Freehold law in regards to Freehold functions and events; to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of my charge as a Wita of the Freehold; to work to ensure the Freehold fulfils the purposes for which it was formed; to keep the Freehold ever true; to protect the privacy of members in the Freehold Roll Call; to work to preserve the fame and good name of the Freehold, knowing that by my word and actions I set an example before all people; and to honour and remember the Witan who have gone before me. This I swear lest all worldly strength and prosperity be stricken from me, and lest I be left as a wretch in the eyes of the Freehold and the gods of the folk. Keeping true this holy oath will bring honour to my name, which will be ever told as long as Freeholders gang to the Althing.

Host: Hails the Wita by name and office.

All: A Full is drunk to the Wita.

Appendix B: Glossary

Article 1: Terms A

B.1.1. Althing

- a. In Ancient Iceland, the Althing was the gathering of all free men to make laws and rulings on crimes and punishment.
- b. In the Freehold the Althing is the Annual General Meeting of the Society.

B.1.2. Anglo-Saxon

- a. The ancient Germanic peoples who conquered and settled in England between the 4th and 5th centuries of the Common Era.

B.1.3. Æsir

- a. Old Norse term for the principal tribe of gods, the singular term is As. Cognate of Old English Os and Ese.

B.1.4. Asatru

- a. Portmanteau of Old Norse “Ás” and “Tru” meaning faith in the Æsir.
- b. Term identifying the revival of the worship of the Old Norse pantheons.

Article 2: Terms B

B.2.1. Bede

- a. A heathen prayer, offered in verbal form to the gods, ancestors or wights.

B.2.2. Blot

- a. Old English term, literally meaning blood used to refer to Heathen Offerings.
- b. Commonly used by Heathens to refer to a ritual offering whether material or symbolic made to the Germanic deities or spirits.

Article 3: Terms D

B.3.1. Disir

- a. Collective term for deceased female spirits tied to the ancestral line.

B.3.2. Drighten

- a. Elected leader of a Guild.

Article 4: Terms F

B.4.1. Freyr

- a. Title of the god Ingui-Freyr, Lord of the Elves and Priest of the gods.
- b. Used by the Freehold to identify our Chieftain and Sacral Luck-Holder.
- c. Old English Cognate Frea.

B.4.2. Frith

- a. Old English term identifying the state of peace, prosperity, and mutual protection offered by kinship and oaths between people; also, used to represent a state of sacredness attached to Temples, Sacred Groves, and other holy sites whether temporary or permanent in nature.

B.4.3. Frith-stead

- a. A place where the peace must be kept, weapons put aside, and no violence may be done; even criminals guilty of the most heinous crimes may not be harmed within a Frith-stead.

B.4.4. Full

- a. A toast that is drunk at a Husel or Symbel usually following an Oath or Bede

Article 5: Terms G

B.5.1. Germanic

- a. Term for the indigenous people of Northern Europe who spoke a Germanic language; including the Saxons, Franks, Danes, Goths, Langobards, Vandals, and Jutes.

B.5.2. Goði/Gyðia/Goðar

- a. Norse term for a priest, called Gyðia if female, plural is Goðar.
- b. Elected priest of a Kindred of the Freehold.
- c. Pronounced using the “Th” from “those” or “then”:
 - i. GO-thee, IPA goði
 - ii. GU-thee-uh, IPA gyðia
 - iii. GO-thar, IPA goðar

Article 6: Terms H

B.6.1. Heathenry

- a. A general term for the revival and reconstruction of the indigenous beliefs of the Northern European tribes and peoples before their conversion to Christianity.

B.6.2. Husel

- a. A ritual feast celebrating communion with the heathen ancestors and gods.

Article 7: Terms I

B.7.1. Inclusive Heathenry

- a. The stream of Heathen thought that believes that race or ethnic heritage do not affect one's ability to commune with the gods, ancestors, or wights in a Heathen manner.

Article 8: Terms K

B.8.1. Kindred

- a. A small local group of heathens bound by kinship or oath who gather to celebrate their belief in the heathen gods.

Article 9: Terms M

B.9.1. Moot

- a. Anglo-Saxon term for a meeting of the free men of a Tribe or Kingdom.
- b. In the Freehold a Moot is a meeting of a Kindred.

Article 10: Terms N

B.10.1. Norse

- a. The ancient peoples originating in Scandinavia, including the Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Icelanders, Geats, and others

Article 11: Terms P

B.11.1. Plurality

- a. More votes than any other candidate or proposal.

Article 12: Terms T

B.12.1. Thane

- a. A free man who is sworn to a King or Jarl in ancient Germanic cultures.
- b. The elected Witan who hold no other office within the Freehold.

B.12.2. Thew(s)

- a. Sacred customs, traditions, beliefs, and ways of behaving that allow Heathens to build relationships with their communities, gods, ancestors, and local spirits.
- b. The laws and customs of a Tribe.
- c. In a Freehold context these refer to the by-laws and customs of a Kindred.

B.12.3. Thing

- a. Norse term for a meeting of the free men of a Tribe or Kingdom.

B.12.4. Troth

- a. Faithfulness or loyalty.

B.12.5. Troth, the

- a. An international organization of Heathens dedicated to the Universalist Heathen paradigm.

Article 13: Terms U

B.13.1. Universalist Heathenry

- a. See Inclusive Heathenry

Article 14: Terms V

B.14.1. Vanir

- a. The tribe of gods primarily associated with nature and fertility.

Article 15: Terms W

B.15.1. Weofod

- a. Anglo-Saxon term for an altar or shrine to the Heathen gods.

B.15.2. Weofodthane

- a. An Anglo-Saxon term for a priest whether male or female.

B.15.3. Witan

- a. General term for an elected officer of the Freehold or one of it's Councils or Kindreds.

B.15.4. Witangemot

- a. The Council of senior territorial and ecclesiastical lords in England that advised and elected the King, never occurs under a pagan king but follows ancient Germanic custom.
- b. The Witan gathered in council to make decisions and govern the Freehold's daily affairs.

B.15.5. Wyrð

- a. The Primal force guiding the process of the world, it may be guided by those with knowledge but even the gods are subject to its whims. Similar in concept to fate and destiny, but far more malleable and requiring the maintenance of the cosmic order.