

## Notes on the Governance of the Greek Orthodox Community of St Athanasios, Cambridge and its School

The Greek Orthodox Community of St Athanasios in Cambridge was founded in November 1968 by the late Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, Gregorios. The Community aims 'to minister to the people through canonical services...and through Greek language schools.'<sup>1</sup> The ecclesiastical authority of the Community is the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, and the educational authority is the Central Education Council of the Archdiocese. Since 1994 the Community is registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (Charity number: 1040908) as a subsidiary of the Charity of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain (Charity number: 243715).

### Who is responsible for the good governance of the Community and the School

The ultimate responsibility for the good governance of the Community and all its activities, including the School, lies with the Charity's trustees. 'Trustees are the people who share ultimate responsibility for governing a charity and directing how it is managed and run.'<sup>2</sup> Trustees must ensure that the Governing documents of the Charity are observed, they must manage the resources of the Charity wisely, they must resolve any conflicts and manage risks, among many other duties. In our Community, the chair of Trustees is ex officio the Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain; other Trustees are nominated by the Community and appointed by the Archbishop. The Charity Commission's webpages report all the appointed Trustees and other essential information about our Charity.<sup>3</sup> The day-to-day management of the Church and the premises is delegated to the Community Committee, while the day-to-day management of the educational activities is delegated to the School Committee. These Committees work in close collaboration towards serving their respective aims in harmony and according to their governing documents.<sup>1,4</sup> They are both accountable to the Trustees and they also need to consult with and report to their members in General Meetings (members of the Community, parents of the School respectively).

### How the Greek School is managed

The School is managed on a daily basis by the School Committee. The education policy of the School is set by the Central Education Council of the Archdiocese and the Education Offices of Cyprus and Greece. There are times when important decisions must be taken that affect the governance of the School and potentially its role within the Community. According to the Charity Commission's guidelines, and the instructions of His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas (01/06/2021), the **School and the Community Committees should always work jointly to find the best solutions**, while the ultimate decisions will have to be taken by the Trustees and the Archdiocese and approved by the members.

As a case study, in 2021 the Trustees and the Committees of the School and the Community agreed that the School's Constitution should be amended to provide clarity on certain matters. It was minuted in Officers Meetings that the two Committees and the Trustees would work together on the proposed set of changes, following which a draft would be submitted to the Archdiocese, as the legal, spiritual, and educational authority of our Community. The draft approved by the Archdiocese would then be put to vote at the General Meeting of the parents of the students of the school. Until that time, the current constitution would apply.<sup>5</sup> The Charity Commission's gives additional specifications for General Meetings which deal with the amendment of Governing Documents: the agenda and the propositions that will be voted upon must be circulated with reasonable notice (typically 21 days in advance of the meeting)<sup>6</sup>, and a majority of at least 75% must vote in favour for any changes to take effect.<sup>7</sup>

This model of cooperation between the Community and the School is enshrined within the Governing documents of the Community and School, and in the Charity Commission's guidelines.

References:

- <sup>1</sup> <http://www.stathanasios.uk/files/St%20Athanasios%20Community%20Constitution-Official%20English%20translation.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/1040908/charity-overview>
- <sup>4</sup> <http://www.stathanasios.uk/files/St%20Athanasios%20School%20Constitution.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> A copy of the Minutes is available from the Secretaries of the Committees of the School and the Community
- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-meetings-cc48/charities-and-meetings>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-make-changes-to-your-charitys-governing-document>

Figure 1: Pictorial representation of the governance of the Greek Orthodox Community and the Greek School of St Athanasios Cambridge according to their governing documents and the Charity Commission for England and Wales guidelines for the governance of registered charities as they are valid to date (01/06/2022).

