

# COTSWOLD ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY CONSTITUTION (REVISED APRIL 2004)

## Name of the Society

The name of the Society shall be The Cotswold Astronomical Society (hereinafter referred to as the "Society").

## 1. Aims

- (a) An association of persons with a shared interest in the study of astronomy and space travel, whose experiences range from the beginner to the advanced amateur.
- (b) To provide opportunities for members to use equipment they cannot themselves own and to assist members in the construction or purchase, by the giving of advice, of their own equipment or observatory.
- (c) The circulation of current information on astronomy and space travel.
- (d) The encouragement of a popular interest in astronomy/space travel amongst the public at large at appropriate times.

## 2. Methods

- (a) The Society shall be run by officers designated to undertake particular tasks, elected by members at the Annual General Meeting.
- (b) Society meetings shall be held at a venue and on a day agreed by members at a regular monthly meeting. All formal business will be conducted then. Meetings will be open to members and prospective members. Guests of members may be admitted at the discretion of the Co-ordinator.
- (c) The Society shall publish a newsletter at intervals during the year, giving details of members' activities, forthcoming events and articles of mutual interest.
- (d) The Society shall organise events for observation or demonstration of equipment, to visit places of interest, and to promote an interest in astronomy/space travel amongst the general public. All Society events must be approved by a simple majority of the elected officers.
- (e) The Society shall maintain a Library of books, tapes, videos, slides and computer discs for the use of members.
- (f) Subject to the agreement of members at an Annual General Meeting, the Society shall be a member of the Federation of Astronomical Societies.

## 3. General rules

- (a) The following officers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting: a Co-ordinator, a Treasurer, a Membership Secretary, a Newsletter Editor, a Newsletter Distributor, a Librarian and an Events Organiser.
- (b) The Annual General Meeting (hereinafter referred to as the AGM) shall be held in April or in such other month as is agreed by members at a regular monthly meeting.
- (c) A Special General Meeting may, if circumstances require, be called by the officers to take place on the date of any monthly meeting, providing notice is given not later than at the preceding monthly meeting. The Special General Meeting is authorised to conduct any business normally conducted at an AGM
- (d) Any paid up member aged 16 or over may stand for an office, provided that he or she is seconded by another member. Only members aged 21 or over may stand for Society Treasurer or Society Co-ordinator.
- (e) Voting shall be by show of hands of paid up members, the winner being the member with the most votes. In the event of a tie, the Co-ordinator shall cast the deciding vote.
- (f) The elected officers may co-opt members to act as officers on behalf of the Society to perform duties as defined by the elected officers. The appointment of a co-opted officer must be approved by a simple majority of the members present at a monthly meeting. A co-opted officer's term of office will run until the following AGM. A co-opted officer will not have the right to vote at meetings of officers.
- (g) Subscriptions:
  - (1) A subscription shall be levied annually on all members, payable in one sum by the 1st June each year.
  - (2) The subscription shall be at 3 levels:
    - (a) The standard level for members in employment.
    - (b) The reduced level, set at 50% of the standard level, for students, retirees or those not in employment.
    - (c) The combined level, at 1½ times the standard or reduced level as applicable, for 2 persons who share the same address. The reduced level will be applicable if both persons are individually eligible for this level.
  - (3) The subscription and the financial year of the society shall be from 1st April to 31st March.
  - (4) The subscription rates shall be determined by members at the AGM.
- (h) The Society Treasurer at the AGM shall present a statement detailing the Society's financial positions and transactions of the proceeding 12 months.

- (i) The annual subscription shall be reduced for members joining the Society during the financial year on a pro rata basis determined by the date of the prospective member's 3rd attendance at a regular monthly meeting.
- (j) The members' subscriptions shall be used to finance the Society's activities, including the rent of the meeting room, the production and distribution of the newsletter, the provision of refreshments at regular Society meetings, the payment of the annual subscription to the FAS (where applicable), the reimbursement to officers for expenses incurred in the execution of Society business, at the discretion of the Treasurer.
- (k) The Society funds may not be used to finance or subsidise any expenditure incurred by members in the pursuit of their individual astronomical activities.
- (l) The Society funds shall be held in a current bank account at the HSBC, Bath Road, Cheltenham.

#### **4. Membership rules**

- (a) Membership shall be open to anyone over the age of 14 who has an interest in astronomy/space travel. Membership of persons below this age is at the discretion of Society Officers.
- (b) Membership shall be conditional on the prompt payment of subscriptions and adherence to the Society's rules and constitution.
- (c) Any member failing to pay the annual subscription shall after a period of 2 months from the date it was due be deemed to have left the Society.
- (d) Application for membership may be made orally or in writing to the Membership Secretary. Applicants will become members upon acceptance of their application by the Membership Secretary and upon payment of the appropriate subscription. Applications may, if the Membership Secretary thinks fit, be referred to a monthly meeting for approval by the membership before acceptance.
- (e) If an application for membership should be refused for any reason then the applicant may be informed of the reason either verbally or in writing by the Membership Secretary or Co-ordinator at the discretion of the Society. No correspondence can be entered into following such a decision.
- (f) Any member who brings the Society into disrepute or in any way fails to observe the Society rules may be named at a regular monthly meeting and a motion shall be proposed seeking their dismissal from the Society. The vote for dismissal must be carried out by a two thirds majority of members attending that meeting. If dismissed, the member shall not be entitled to a refund of subscriptions already paid for that financial year. Before any such vote is taken the member must be given the opportunity of expressing his or her views.
- (g) Members taking part in Society activities do so at their own risk and the Society cannot be held responsible for any injury or damage whatsoever as may arise from any Society activity.
- (h) Members who leave the Society, other than by way of dismissal, may at the discretion of the Society Treasurer receive a refund equal to that fraction of the financial year's subscription remaining.

#### **5. Society Officers**

##### **(a) Co-ordinator**

- (1) The Co-ordinator shall be responsible for the general running of the Society.
- (2) The Co-ordinator shall ensure that all Society projects are maintained and completed on time (if a time limit is set by members at a regular monthly meeting).
- (3) The Co-ordinator shall pay special attention to invitations from other societies to join in events and to meetings organised by the FAS to ensure that members are fully aware of the nature and relevant dates of such meetings and to encourage Society members to attend such events.
- (4) The Co-ordinator (or a deputy appointed by the Co-ordinator) shall chair the monthly meetings of the Society, General Meetings and meetings of officers.
- (5) The Co-ordinator shall ensure at the end of each monthly meeting that the meeting hall is left tidy and securely locked with the lights switched off. The Co-ordinator shall also ensure that any key is returned to the appropriate key-holder of the hall.
- (6) Members shall be requested to inform the Co-ordinator of their individual activities where they consider this would be of interest to the whole Society and the Co-ordinator will be responsible for passing such information to members either verbally or via the Newsletter.

##### **(b) Treasurer**

- (1) The Treasurer shall be responsible for collecting subscriptions and other debts incurred by members on Society's activities.
- (2) The Treasurer shall be responsible for vetting all Society expenditure and for approving reimbursements to individual officers or members where appropriate.

- (3) The Treasurer and one other officer nominated by the membership at the AGM shall be responsible for the withdrawal of funds from the Society's bank account. No funds may be withdrawn without two signatures to the cheque or cheques. The Treasurer shall have the responsibility of paying in funds to the Society bank account.
- (4) The Treasurer shall maintain suitable records, with receipts wherever possible, of the Society's income and expenditure to enable a financial statement to be presented at the AGM.
- (5) The Treasurer shall advise the membership of the proposed level of subscription for the forthcoming financial year at the AGM.
- (6) The Treasurer shall advise the Membership Secretary of the names of potential members who subsequently have paid the appropriate subscription so that the Membership Secretary can add such names to the list of paid up members.

**(c) Membership Secretary**

- (1) The Membership Secretary shall be responsible for keeping a current list of members' names and addresses.
- (2) The Membership Secretary shall receive all applications for membership.
- (3) The Membership Secretary shall be responsible for seeing that membership rules are followed and notify the Society if they are not.
- (4) The Membership Secretary shall liaise with the Editor of the Newsletter to ensure that all paid up members and honorary members receive copies of newsletters promptly.

**(d) Newsletter Editor**

- (1) The Newsletter Editor shall edit all articles and news items from members for publication.
- (2) The Newsletter Editor shall have sole discretion on the items to be included in each successive Newsletter and may edit articles where necessary to ensure that the most economic use of material is undertaken.
- (3) The Newsletter Editor shall liaise with the Newsletter Distributor to ensure that members not receiving their copy at a formal meeting receive their issue as quickly as possible.

**(e) Newsletter Distributor**

- (1) The Newsletter Distributor shall liaise with the Newsletter Editor to ensure that copies of the Newsletter not collected at formal meetings are distributed to members and honorary members at an early date.
- (2) The Newsletter Distributor shall be reimbursed for the cost of envelopes and postage (second class mail).

**(f) Events Organiser**

- (1) The Events Organiser shall organise and obtain speakers from both within and outside the Society for the regular monthly meetings.
- (2) The Events Organiser shall endeavour to plan ahead for at least 6 months so that an events programme can be published at least twice a year.
- (3) Members wishing to give talks either as a main or supporting speaker shall contact the Events Organiser in good time to allow planning of future meetings.
- (4) The Events Organiser will be responsible for ensuring that suitable equipment (projector/overhead projector) is available to assist in the presentation of the talk.
- (5) The Events Organiser shall liaise with the Co-ordinator and the Newsletter Editor to ensure that members are advised of future events of the Society.

**(g) Society Librarian**

- (1) The Society Librarian shall be responsible for the collection of books/magazines/videos/discs/tapes to be made available to members on loan at no charge.
- (2) Any material provided shall remain the property of the original owner unless he or she is willing to donate such material to the Society outright. Members shall be required to return any items borrowed within a reasonable time in good condition and to make good, either by replacement or financial compensation to the original owner, any losses or damage that may arise.
- (3) The Librarian shall bring to the notice of the Co-ordinator any dispute arising from this requirement and the Co-ordinator's decision in the matter shall be final in settlement.

**6. Miscellaneous items**

**(a) Honorary members**

Members may nominate persons as honorary members who will receive all Society benefits (including the Newsletter) without payment of subscription, where such persons are considered to merit membership, subject to the approval of members at a regular monthly meeting.

**(b) Overseas members**

The Society will seek contact with overseas societies in an effort to widen the knowledge of the work undertaken by the Society and the overseas societies. Any member may propose links with such societies and accept the responsibility of maintaining correspondence on the understanding that they will make available to the Society as a whole information received.

Any expense incurred in maintaining these links shall be financed by the Society subject to the approval of members at the AGM.

**(c) Trophies**

- (1) The Society shall provide 2 trophies to be awarded annually, known as the (a) Dan Turton Trophy, and (b) Robin Townley Trophy.
- (2) The Dan Turton Trophy shall be awarded to the member who in the consideration of the members of the Society has, within the previous 12 months ending 31st March, recorded the best astronomical and related images using the medium of their choice, bearing in mind the equipment available for their use.
- (3) The Robin Townley Trophy shall be awarded to the member who in the opinion of the members of the Society has contributed most to the promotion and general advancement of the Society's activities in the previous year ending 31st March. The elected officers will only be eligible for this trophy if they make an exceptional contribution beyond the constitutional duties required of their offices.
- (4) The award of the trophies shall be decided by the views of the members as a whole according to the following procedure:
  - Nominations for the awards will be requested in the May newsletter. The officers of the Society may, at this stage, suggest the names of members who in their view merit nomination.
  - Nominations must be received in writing by the Co-ordinator before the end of June. They must include a short reason for why the member is being nominated and contain the name and signature of the person making the nomination.
  - A voting form listing the names of the nominees will be issued in the July newsletter. For votes to be eligible, voting forms must be returned to the Co-ordinator by the end of August.
  - The trophies will be awarded to the members who respectively receive the most votes. In the event of a tie for either trophy, the elected officers will decide to which of the tying members the award will be made. If the officers are unable to reach agreement, the final decision will be made by the Co-ordinator.
- (5) The winners of the awards will be announced and the trophies presented at the Society's September meeting.
- (6) Each trophy will, at the Society's expense, be engraved with the name of the winner.

**(d) Meetings of officers**

The officers will meet as frequently as is necessary to conduct the business of the Society. Such a meeting may be called by any officer at any time providing 7 days' notice is given. The Co-ordinator's decision as to whether such a meeting is necessary shall be final.

**(e) Life membership**

- (1) A member may be offered Honorary Life Membership of the Society if it is considered that the work undertaken by that member for the Society has been of such standing as to merit the award. The award must be proposed and seconded at the AGM and passed by a majority of members eligible to vote.
- (2) An Honorary Life Member shall be entitled to receive the Society Newsletter free of charge after leaving the area covered by the Society.

**(f) Amendments to the constitution**

- (1) Any member who wishes to propose an amendment to the Constitution may do so at any monthly meeting, providing:
  - (a) the amendment is given in writing to the Co-ordinator 7 days prior to the meeting, and
  - (b) it is signed by the member and also by a seconder.
- (2) The proposal shall be treated as a matter of urgency at the next meeting.
- (3) The amendment shall be put to the membership and accepted only if there is a two-thirds majority of paid up members in favour of the motion by a show of hands.