

# COTSWOLD ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY CONSTITUTION (REVISED APRIL 2015)

## 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
  - (1) Society meetings will be held at a venue and on a day agreed by members at a regular monthly meeting. All formal business will be conducted then.
  - (2) Meetings will be open to members and visitors. Visitors are permitted a maximum of 2 visits per financial year for each of which a charge equal to 10% of the standard level of annual subscription (rounded to 50p above) will be made. If the visitor joins the Society on the day of a visit, the charge for that visit will be fully refunded.
  - (3) Guests of members may be admitted free of charge 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) Subject to the agreement of members at an Annual General Meeting, the Society shall be a member of the Federation of Astronomical Societies.

## 3. Membership and subscriptions

- (a) Membership shall be open to anyone aged 18 or over who has an interest in astronomy/space travel. Persons aged 11-17 may become Junior Members in association with an adult member who must accompany and be responsible for the Junior Member at all Society events. Membership is not available to anyone under the age of 11.
- (b) 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.
- (c) 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.
- (d) A subscription as specified in paragraph 3(e) shall be levied annually on all members for the financial year 1st April to 31st March next. The subscription becomes due upon completion of the relevant AGM and is payable in one sum no later than 30th June of that financial year. Any member failing to pay the annual subscription by that date shall be deemed to have left the Society and shall no longer be entitled to any of the benefits of membership.
- (e) Membership categories and subscription rates:
  - (1) The Society shall have four categories of membership and associated subscription rates for members aged 18 and over:
    - (i) Standard, applicable to anyone who is not eligible for any of the other categories. The subscription rate for this category shall be determined by members at the AGM each year.
    - (ii) Concessionary (subscription half the standard rate), available to anyone in full time education, aged 65 or over, or not in employment.
    - (iii) Combined (subscription 1½ times the standard rate), available for 2 persons who share the same address.
    - (iv) Combined concessionary (subscription 1½ times the concessionary rate), available for 2 persons who share the same address, both of whom are eligible for the concessionary rate as defined in paragraph 3(e)(1)(ii).
  - (2) Persons aged 11-17 at the start of the Society's financial year or upon joining may become Junior Members in accordance with paragraph 3(a) in association with any of the above categories. The first Junior in any such membership will be free of charge. For each subsequent Junior in the same membership a subscription of one quarter the standard rate will be payable.
- (f) 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 joining.
- (g) Membership shall be conditional on the prompt payment of subscriptions and adherence to the Society's rules and constitution.
- (h) 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.

- (i) 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.
- (j) 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.

#### 4. General rules

- (a) The following officers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting: a Co-ordinator, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Membership Secretary, a Newsletter Editor, a Newsletter Distributor, an Events Organiser, an Observing Director, and a Website Manager..
- (b) The Annual General Meeting 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 Annual General Meeting
- (d) Any paid up member aged 18 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 Annual General Meeting. A co-opted officer will not have the right to vote at meetings of officers.
- (g) The officers will ensure that any information held by the Society about members will be relevant to the Society's business. Such information will be kept securely and confidentially, and will be used solely for the conduct of the Society's operation, in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act.
- (h) The financial year of the Society shall be from 1st April to 31st March.
- (i) The Society Treasurer at the Annual General Meeting shall present a statement detailing the Society's financial positions and transactions of the preceding 12 months.
- (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), and 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) Banking
  - (1) The Society funds shall be held in appropriate bank accounts at the HSBC, Bath Road, Cheltenham.
  - (2) The Treasurer and the Co-ordinator shall be nominated as cheque signatories. Any cheque drawn upon the Society's accounts must be signed by both signatories.
  - (3) The Treasurer shall be designated the Primary User for internet banking.
  - (4) The Primary User alone shall be authorised to operate and administer internet banking.
  - (5) The Co-ordinator and the Membership Secretary shall be granted view-only access to the Society's accounts via internet banking.

#### 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) Secretary

- (1) The Secretary shall take minutes at officers' meetings including the AGM.
- (2) The Secretary shall circulate such notes for the approval of officers and deal with any amendments arising.
- (3) The Secretary shall deal with all communications oral or written from the FAS after consulting any other officer who might be involved.
- (4) The Secretary shall maintain the constitution to reflect the current procedures and aims of the Society subject to the approval of members if necessary following a Special Meeting as set out at item 4 (c) of the current constitution.

- (5) The Secretary shall organise an effective tea and coffee rota in advance of Society meetings.
- (6) The Secretary shall deal with any casual correspondence of any sort sent to the CAS as a result of activities arising from any member
- (7) The Secretary shall assist any officer with any enquiries from the media as requested.
- (8) The Secretary shall deal with any other similar matters arising as members may dictate.

**(c) Treasurer**

- (1) The Treasurer shall be responsible for the safe keeping of the Society's funds, and for the operation, maintenance and administration of the Society's bank accounts.
- (2) The Treasurer shall be responsible for receiving all monies due to and collected by the Society, and for paying all debts incurred by the Society in carrying out its activities.
- (3) The Treasurer shall be responsible for vetting all Society expenditure and for approving reimbursements to individual officers or members where appropriate.
- (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 Annual General Meeting.
- (5) The Treasurer shall advise the membership of the proposed level of subscription for the forthcoming financial year at the Annual General Meeting.

**(d) Membership Secretary**

- (1) The Membership Secretary shall be responsible for keeping a current list of names, addresses and all other pertinent information about members necessary for the conduct of the Society's operation.
- (2) The Membership Secretary shall receive all applications for membership.
- (3) The Membership Secretary shall be responsible for collecting all new and renewal subscriptions from members.
- (4) The Membership Secretary shall be responsible for seeing that membership rules are followed and notify the Society if they are not.
- (5) The Membership Secretary shall liaise with the Editor of the Newsletter and the Newsletter Distributor to ensure that all paid up members and honorary members receive copies of newsletters promptly.

**(e) 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.

**(f) Newsletter Distributor**

- (1) The Newsletter Distributor shall liaise with the Newsletter Editor and the Membership Secretary 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).

**(g) 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.

**(h) Observing Director**

- (1) The Observing Director shall promote observational astronomy activities within the Society, including the facilitation of mentoring activities.
- (2) The Observing Director shall be responsible for collating and maintaining records of the observing activities of Society members.
- (3) The Observing Director shall provide regular updates to members on the observational activities of the Society as a whole.
- (4) The Observing Director shall be responsible for the submission of astronomical observations and data made by the Society to other bodies such as the BAA etc as appropriate.
- (5) The Observing Director shall oversee, with the Co-ordinator, the lending of Society equipment to members and to ensure their safe return to the Society and to arrange if necessary, with the help of other members of the Society, assistance in making best use of such Society equipment.

**(i) Website Manager**

- (1) The Website Manager shall oversee, co-ordinate and maintain the Society's Website.

## 6. Miscellaneous items

### (a) Patrons

- (1) The Society may appoint as a Patron any person who, in the opinion of the members, can provide support or assistance (financial or otherwise) to the Society and who has confirmed his or her willingness to do so. The appointment must be approved by members at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting.
- (2) The appointment will be without time limit but may be terminated by the Patron's resignation without notice at any time, or by resolution at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting that the appointment be discontinued. There will be no limit to the number of Patrons that may be appointed. Patrons will have no voting rights in the Society and the Society will not incur any expenses arising from the role of Patron.
- (3) The nomination of any person as Patron must be supported by a proposer and seconder. The proposer must inform the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting of the benefits that could be expected from the appointment and provide confirmation of the nominee's willingness to undertake the role.
- (4) Following the Patron's appointment, the type of support anticipated will be described in an appointment letter.

### (b) 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.

### (c) 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 Annual General Meeting.

### (d) 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. The voting procedure to be used for deciding the winner of the award will be specified by the officers each year.
- (3) The Robin Townley Trophy shall be awarded to the member who in the opinion of the officers of the Society has contributed most to the promotion and general advancement of the Society's activities in the previous year ending 31st March. Officers of the Society will not be eligible for this award.
- (4) Each trophy will, at the Society's expense, be engraved with the name of the winner.

### (e) 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.

### (f) 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 Annual General Meeting 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.

### (g) Amendments to the constitution

- (1) Amendments to the constitution shall only be considered at the Annual General Meeting or at a Special General Meeting.
- (2) Proposals will normally be considered at the next Annual General Meeting. However, for an urgent change a Special General Meeting may be called at the discretion of the officers.
- (3) Any member who wishes to propose an amendment to the constitution may do so by notifying the Co-ordinator in writing. The proposal must be signed by the proposer and a seconder.
- (4) The proposal must be received by the Co-ordinator not later than at the monthly meeting three months before the Annual General Meeting. Special General Meetings for urgent proposals may be called at shorter notice.
- (5) The Co-ordinator will communicate the proposal to all members prior to the meeting to which it is to be presented.
- (6) The amendment shall be put to the membership and accepted only if there is a two-thirds majority in favour of the motion by a show of hands of those members present and voting.