

COTSWOLD ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY CONSTITUTION (REVISED APRIL 2022)

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 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 Coordinator.
- (c) The Society shall publish news at intervals during the year, either by email or via the website, giving information, details of members' activities, and articles of mutual interest. The news and emails are under the banner of Mercury.
- (d) The Society shall organize 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 or online. 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 orally or in writing by the Membership Secretary or Coordinator 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 1 ½ times the standard rate), available for 2 persons who share the same address.
- (iv) Combined concessionary (subscription 1 ½ 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 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 Coordinator, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Membership Secretary, an Editor, 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, provided notice is given not later than at the preceding monthly meeting. The Special General Meeting is authorized 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 Coordinator.

(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 Coordinator 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 next 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 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 as selected by the officers
 - (2) The Treasurer and Coordinator shall be named signatories on the Society's bank account(s). Any changes to the operation of the Society's banking facilities must be signed by both signatories.
 - (3) The Treasurer shall be designated the Primary User for internet banking. The Coordinator shall be designated the Secondary User.
 - (4) The Primary User alone shall be authorized to operate and administer the Society's banking. By agreement with a majority of elected members, the Secondary User may temporarily operate in the Primary User role.
 - (5) Both Primary and Secondary Users are permitted to use a Society bank debit card allocated to them for purchases relevant to the operation of the Society as agreed by elected members. The Primary User (Treasurer) is responsible for the accounting of these purchases to be included in the Society's annual accounts report.

5. Society Officers

(a) Coordinator

- (1) The Coordinator shall be responsible for the general running of the Society.
- (2) The Coordinator 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 Coordinator shall pay special attention to invitations from other societies to join in events and to meetings organized 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 Coordinator (or a deputy appointed by the Coordinator) shall chair the monthly meetings of the Society, General meetings and meetings of officers.
- (5) The Coordinator 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 Coordinator shall also ensure that any key is returned to the appropriate key holder of the hall.
- (6) Members shall be requested to inform the Coordinator of their individual activities where they consider this would be of interest to the whole Society and the Coordinator will be responsible for passing such information to members either orally, by email or via the website or a 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 organize 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 Society 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 maintaining 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 have an overview of all applications for membership to ensure they are correct.
- (3) The Membership Secretary shall be responsible for checking that all new and renewal subscriptions from members are processed, in collaboration with the Treasurer.
- (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 be responsible for welcoming and greeting members and introducing new members to others.
- (6) The Membership Secretary shall produce lists for attendance and beverages for each meeting.
- (7) The Membership Secretary shall produce an analysis of the membership numbers, attendances, and trends for the committee and membership.
- (8) The Membership Secretary shall, along with other committee members, encourage recruitment of new members.
- (9) The Membership Secretary shall report any technical issues to the Webmaster.

(e) Editor

- (1) The Editor shall edit articles and news items from members for publication
- (2) The Editor shall have sole discretion on the items to be included in publications or on the website and may edit news items or articles where necessary.
- (3) The Editor shall liaise with the Website Manager regarding articles placed on the website.

(f) Events' Organiser

- (1) The Events' Organiser shall organize and obtain speakers from both within and outside the Society for the regular monthly meetings.
- (2) The Events' Organiser shall endeavor to plan ahead for 6 months so that an events programme can be published.
- (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 shall be responsible for ensuring that suitable equipment such as projectors is available to assist in the presentation of the talk.
- (5) The Events' Organiser shall liaise with the Coordinator, the Editor and Website Manager to ensure that members are advised of future events of the Society.

(g) 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 encourage members to submit observations and photographs to be reported on the website, or to pass on such observations to the Editor or Website Manager for publication.
- (3) The Observing Director shall be responsible for passing on any relevant observations and data made by the Society to other bodies such as the BAA etc. as appropriate.
- (4) The Observing Director shall oversee, with the Coordinator, 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 equipment.

(h) Website Manager

- (1) The Website Manager shall oversee, coordinate, and maintain the Society's website construction, hosting and email systems
- (2) The Website Manager shall liaise with other relevant officers regarding articles, information and observations to be placed on the website where appropriate.
- (3) The Website Manager shall maintain the secure cloud sharing of membership data for ease of access by the Treasurer and Membership Secretary,

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) 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.

(c) Trophies

- (1) The Society shall provide two trophies to be awarded annually, or as the officers deem appropriate, known as the (a) Dan Turton Trophy, and (b) Robin Townly 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 at the time.
- (3) The Robin Townley Trophy shall be awarded to the member who in the opinion of the officers 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.

(d) Meetings of Officers

The officers will meet as frequently as 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 Coordinator's decision as to whether such a meeting is necessary shall be final.

(e) Honorary Memberships

- (1) Members may nominate persons as Honorary Members who will receive all Society benefits (including website access) without payment of subscription where such persons are considered to merit membership subject to the approval of members at a regular monthly meeting.
- (2) 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 agreed by a majority of members present at the meeting. Life Members will receive all Society benefits (including website access) without payment of subscription.

(f) 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 Coordinator in writing. The proposal must be signed by the proposer and a seconder.

- (4) The proposal must be received by the Coordinator 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 Coordinator 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 present and voting.