

# Constitution of North Essex Astronomical Society



## Name

The Society shall be known as the North Essex Astronomical Society and is referred to below as 'the Society'.

## Aim of the Society

To promote all aspects of astronomy by:

- Exchange of ideas and information about astronomy in general.
- Providing an astronomical education to the general public via meetings, news submissions to the media and talks to schools and other societies.
- Endeavour to provide access to observing facilities for members.

## Membership

- The Society shall be open to anyone with an interest in astronomy.
- The Society intends to offer the following levels of membership:
  - Single membership
  - Family membership (two or more members in the same household)
  - Junior membership (under 16)
  - Student membership (enrolled at an educational establishment)
  - Affiliated membership (excludes use of observatory)
- The annual fee for membership is agreed at the AGM.
- Membership renewals are due annually twelve months from the start of their subscription, members have one month to renew their subscription before benefits of membership are withdrawn, exceptional circumstances can apply.

## Membership specifically entitles you to:

- Use of the Society observatory
- Loan of Society telescopes (when and if available)
- Free newsletter
- Borrowing of society equipment: slides, books or magazines
- Attendance at members-only functions and meetings
- Voting rights at AGM and EGM meetings
- Affiliated membership of societies that the Society subscribes to.

## Removal of Membership

- The Committee shall have, at its absolute discretion, the power to remove from membership any person whose conduct at Society functions or elsewhere is objectionable, aggressive or likely to bring the Society into disrepute. No such member shall have any claim on the Society for monies paid. That member or another member may appeal in writing against the decision within 28 days. Such an appeal shall be heard at a Committee Meeting.

## Public Meetings

- Public meetings will be held monthly and any Society proceedings arising will be submitted to members in the next newsletter and/or via the Society website and/or social media.
- Fees for all meetings will be set at the AGM.
- In the event of special circumstances affecting meeting fees, the committee may charge a higher fee at its discretion.
- Viewing evenings will be arranged as conditions allow or special events are due. Trips may be organised throughout the year.

## Committee

- The Committee will be elected at the AGM held every year.
- Committee meetings will be throughout the year, when necessary, left to the discretion of the committee at a minimum of 6 per year.
- Minutes will be available for inspection by all members at the next available meeting or on request to the Secretary of the Society.
- The Committee shall comprise, as a minimum, a Chair, a Treasurer and a Secretary.
- Up to twelve more positions within the Committee exist. These may be elected at the AGM or co-opted. The total size of the Committee will not exceed fifteen members.
- Positions can be co-opted at the discretion of the Committee in the fulfilment of the Society's aims, however, co-opted roles will be limited so that they cannot make up more than 50% of the Committee.
- Decisions affecting the day by day running of the Society shall be made on the basis of one member, one vote, with a simple majority carrying the vote.
- The Committee can setup sub-committees involving the general membership of the Society to help fulfil the aims of the Society.
- Any decisions affecting the constitution shall be put to an Extraordinary General Meeting or at the Annual General Meeting.
- A standard quorum will be 50% of members of the committee. In unusual/urgent circumstances a lesser number may be accepted. In this latter case, all decisions taken will be assessed and re-approved at the next full quorum meeting.
- The Committee are to pay subscription fees, but at the reduced rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the standard rate.

## General Meetings

- The AGM will be held in September every year and should:
  - Receive minutes from the previous AGM.
  - Set annual subscription rate and other money due.
  - Statement of accounts
  - Allow discussion and resolutions from the general membership on the management and activities of the Society.
  - Elect officers of the Committee.
- The outgoing Chairperson shall conduct the AGM until the new Committee has been elected.
- Extraordinary General Meetings may be called for on receipt of a written request from at least 10 percent of the members to the Chairperson, or by committee resolution. The Membership shall receive a minimum of 10 days' advance warning of the EGM date.
- Every member has a vote in all matters apart from that would make the committee personally financially liable, in which case the views of the society will be taken on board

and the final vote will be with the committee. All motions will be passed by a simple majority, in the event of a tie the Chair will have the deciding vote.

### Election of Committee

- All posts are up for re-election every year at the AGM. Notice for these posts will be sent out at least 6 weeks before the AGM commences.
- Nominations must be made up to one week before the start of the AGM/EGM. Nominations can be self-nominated.
- Nominated persons will have the opportunity to address the membership and where there is more than one nominated person for a post then a vote will be held.
- Members will have the opportunity to a postal vote if they are unable to attend the meeting. Any postal votes must be received before or on the day of the vote; any received after will not be counted. Proxy votes will not be allowed.
- If only one nomination is received for a post, then the nominated person will be elected to the post.

### Finances

- A bank account will be maintained on behalf of the group at a bank agreed by the committee. There will also be a PayPal account maintained by the Treasurer to allow for online transactions.
- Signatories to the account will be the members of the committee.
- Each cheque will require two signatures one of whom will normally be the Treasurer. The signatories must not be related nor members of the same household.
- Records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given to each meeting.
- An annual statement of accounts will be presented to the Annual General Meeting.
- All money raised by the Society will be spent solely on the objects laid out in the constitution.

### Dissolution

In the event of the society dissolving, all debts are to be settled, subject to Society funds. Any remaining assets will be offered for sale, and monies distributed as decided by a majority vote of all members.

### Document History

Date	Author	Version	Comments
5/8/16	James Hannan	6	Updated, highlighting key components that constitution was missing e.g. voting for new committee members
3/8/18	James Hannan	7	Update on membership, no longer pro-rata, membership will be 12 months regardless on joining date. Approved at AGM 19/09/2018.