



Constitution of the Society for the History of Astronomy

Founded 29th June 2002

Seventh revision of the Constitution, adopted at the Annual General Meeting held at the Birmingham & Midland Institute on 26th October 2024.

1. NAME

The society shall be named the Society for the History of Astronomy, and is hereafter referred to as the Society.

2. OBJECT & AIMS

(i) To promote an academic, educational and popular interest in the history of the science of astronomy and related subjects.

(ii) To encourage new research into the history of astronomy, especially amateur research at the local level, and to facilitate its collation, preservation, publication and dissemination both by conventional means and through the internet or such other new means as may subsequently become available.

(iii) To bring together those with a common interest in the subject, whether amateur or professional researcher or general enthusiast, and to organise activities for the benefit and interest of the members.

3. COUNCIL

(i) The general conduct and arrangement of business of the Society shall be in the hands of the elected Council of the Society (hereafter referred to as Council), composed of a Chair*, a Vice Chair*, a General Secretary, a Membership Secretary, a Treasurer, a Meetings Secretary and not more than ten other elected Councillors. (* Chair, Chairman, Chairwoman or Chairperson as preferred by the elected Councillor.)

(ii) The Chair, Vice Chair, General Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer and Meetings Secretary and general Councillors shall be elected/re-elected at each Annual General Meeting (hereafter referred to as the AGM), or in exceptional circumstances at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). Nominations for Council elections must be submitted in writing and received 10 working days before the AGM, to the General Secretary via email or sent by post to the AGM venue as advised at the time in an envelope marked "SHA AGM" where it will be collected before the start of the AGM. Email/postal votes cast in accordance with 4(iii) will be included in the ballot.

(iii) The elected Council shall have the right to appoint an Honorary President and up to two Honorary Vice Presidents, who shall have full rights to attend and vote at Council meetings. The Council shall also have power to delegate specific responsibilities and to co-opt additional Councillors, such co-opted Councillors being eligible to serve until the following AGM. Council may appoint sub-committees and additional officers as required.

(iv) If any Chair, Vice Chair, General Secretary, Membership Secretary, Meetings Secretary, or Treasurer chooses to resign mid-term, or is unable to continue in office for personal or medical reasons, or is asked to resign by the Council, Council may appoint a new Councillor to fill the vacant office until the following AGM.

(v) Council shall meet as necessary, at least twice per year. Meetings shall be in person or by whatever communication medium is deemed appropriate, e.g. electronic means. Five members of Council will constitute a quorum. Other Society members may attend, at the discretion of Council, as observers at those meetings held in person.

4. VOTING

(i) Only fully paid-up and Honorary members shall be entitled to the privileges and voting rights of the Society or to become Council members.

(ii) At all meetings of the Society (AGM, EGM or other meetings) a decision shall be reached by a simple majority of those attending, except under section 4(iii), where votes to the General Secretary by either email (preferred) or by post to the meeting venue as advised at the time in an envelope marked "SHA meeting" where it will be collected before the start of the meeting; post submitted and received no later than 10 days before the meeting will also be counted towards the decision. In the event of a tie, the Chair would have the casting vote.

(iii) Email or postal votes may be submitted by any member entitled to vote under 4(i) on matters regarding amendments to the Constitution under 8, for the election of Council, or in the event of a vote being called for dissolution of the Society under 10.

(iv) If the AGM/EGM is held online, voting should be preferably by using online voting system, or if that is not available by simple show of hands using reactions (or equivalent) counted by a teller.

(v) At in-person AGM/EGMs, normally voting is by simple show of hands, counted by teller(s). However, if at least 5 of the members present and eligible to vote request a secret ballot at the AGM/EGM, papers will be made available for members to complete and place in a ballot box.

5. MEMBERSHIP

(i) Any person seeking Society membership shall, on the payment of the due subscription and subject to approval by the Council, be admitted to the Society. If approval is not granted, correspondence will not be entered into on the matter. A person can only apply to join under their true name (not an alias) and legitimate postal address. Failure to do so will be grounds for refusal of membership or subsequent summary expulsion by decision of the Council.

(ii) Exceptional disregard of the Society's interests by a member may result in Council ordering expulsion after consideration at a meeting where such a member is entitled to present a case. Council's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into on the matter.

(iii) Any person deemed by Council to have rendered valuable service to the Society, history or the science of astronomy may be granted Honorary Membership by the Society at any AGM, such membership being subject to the Constitution of the Society as it applies to all members.

6. SUBSCRIPTIONS

(i) Each member (other than Honorary Members referred to at 5(iii)) shall pay an annual subscription.

(ii) There are five classes of membership, as follows:

(a) Ordinary Member – standard membership, paying the full subscription.

(b) Concessionary Member – members under 18 years old, students in full time education or members in receipt of state benefits (other than basic state pension) may subscribe at a reduced rate. Proof of status may be required to qualify for Concessionary Membership.

(c) Family member – the members of one family living at a single address may join as a Family, entitled to one copy of any publications issued under Ordinary Membership, one vote, and the opportunity for all Family Members so joining to attend Society events, subject individually to any charges made to Ordinary Members.

(d) Institutional Member – an organisation, institution or company may join the Society as an Institutional Member, entitled to one copy of any publications issued under Ordinary Membership and the opportunity for one representative of that organisation, institution or company to attend Society events, subject to any charges made to Ordinary members.

Institutional Membership does not include voting rights.

(e) Honorary Member – members invited by Council to enjoy free membership in recognition of service to the Society, history or the science of astronomy, whether for a limited period or for life.

(iii) Subscriptions are due on the anniversary of joining and shall be paid annually. Subscriptions are non refundable except in special circumstances at the discretion of the Council. Renewal of membership, if not made within **one month** of the date of expiry will be considered to have resigned. Fees for the membership classes described above will be agreed at the AGM/EGM.

(iv) Subscriptions shall be reviewed by Council, who may submit recommendations to a General Meeting (normally the AGM), which shall vote on whether to adopt these recommendations.

7. MEETINGS

(i) There shall normally be an Annual Conference, to be held in the Autumn as soon after 1 October as is practicable, at a suitable venue determined by Council. The AGM should normally be incorporated within this Annual Conference. However, under exceptional circumstances (e.g. pandemic lockdown restrictions, widespread travel disruption due to industrial action or extreme

weather events), subject to Council agreement, the AGM may be held using an online conference system (e.g. Zoom) on or as soon as possible after the planned date of the Autumn Conference. Admission to the AGM shall be free to all Society members. Other General Meetings and events may be organised by Council or sub-committees as required.

(ii) At each AGM, the Treasurer shall submit an account and balance sheet for the past financial year, which shall be the period 1 October to 30 September immediately preceding the AGM date.

(iii) Visitors may attend any General Meeting upon writing their names in the attendance book and paying the appropriate fee. Those visiting more than once (unless formal guests of the Society) will be invited to apply for membership. Council reserve the right to refuse booking and/or admission to any visitor.

(iv) The Vice Chair, Meetings Secretary, or other Council member as deputy shall chair meetings if the Chair is unavailable.

8. AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

(i) Any member or members (including members of Council) may submit proposed amendment(s) to this Constitution to Council for their consideration. The amendment will be voted on at a General Meeting (normally the AGM). Prior notice of such an intention will be given by post/email. Members who are unable to attend such a meeting will be invited to cast a vote by email to the General Secretary (preferred) or by post, as advised at the time, to arrive no later than 10 days before the meeting.

9. GENERAL

All members shall act in the best interests of the Society. The Council accepts no responsibility for the property or person of anyone attending meetings or Society activities. Members are deemed to have accepted this Constitution in full and agree to abide by its rulings and the fair and appropriate decisions arrived at by Council in its light.

10. DISSOLUTION

If, upon the winding up or dissolution of the Society, there remain any assets whatsoever after the satisfaction of all outstanding debts and liabilities, such assets shall not be paid to or distributed to members of the Society, but shall be given or transferred to some other institution not formed for carrying on business for profit, and having objects similar to the objects of the Society to be determined by resolution of the Society at or before the time of dissolution or if and so far as effect cannot be given to the foregoing provision, then to some charitable object. This rule shall not be altered in any respect unless the alteration is agreed at an AGM/EGM.

The Council for the Society for the History of Astronomy

Signed on

26th October 2024

Chair:

Carolyn Kennett

Vice-Chair:

David Anthony Sellers

Treasurer:

Geoffrey Alan King

General Secretary:

Michael John Leggett

Membership Secretary:

Graham Jones

Meetings Secretary:

Michael Frost