



# Worthing

## Astronomical Society

[www.worthing-astronomical-society.com](http://www.worthing-astronomical-society.com)

### CONSTITUTION

MARCH 2009

## **1 NAME**

The Society shall be called the Worthing Astronomical Society, hereinafter referred to as 'the Society'.

## **2 AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

The aims of the Society shall be to:

- 2.1 Promote interest in all aspects of astronomy.
- 2.2 Encourage observational work.
- 2.3 Organise regular meetings at which reports of practical work may be presented and discussed and to which guest speakers may be invited.
- 2.4 Provide equipment that members may use to develop their interest in astronomy (see section 12).
- 2.5 Provide a focal point for astronomical activity in Worthing and the surrounding area.
- 2.6 Provide a channel of communication with other local, regional and national astronomical societies.

## **3 AFFILIATION**

The Society may be affiliated to other astronomical societies such as the British Astronomical Association, the Federation of Astronomical Societies and the Southern Group of Astronomical Societies as the Executive Committee sees fit.

## **4 MEMBERSHIP**

### **4.1 Classes of Membership**

The Society shall have five classes of membership:

- 4.1.1 Adult membership, for persons aged 16 years or over.
- 4.1.2 Junior membership for persons under 16 years old.
- 4.1.3 Family membership for the immediate members of a family at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
- 4.1.4 Student membership for full time students, or persons who have enrolled on an Adult Education Astronomy course run by the Society, for one year only.
- 4.1.5 Honorary Membership which the Executive Committee may award to persons who have contributed greatly to the Society over a period of time or to persons whose Honorary Membership the Executive Committee feels would increase the status of the Society or would benefit the Society in some way.

### **4.2 Voting Rights**

Members in categories 4.1.1 - 4.1.3 and 4.1.5 shall be known as 'Voting Members' and shall have full voting rights, except where voting on subscription issues where members in 4.1.5 shall not have a vote. Members in categories 4.1.4 will not be 'Voting Members' and will not have voting rights.

### **4.3 Membership Application**

To gain membership, all applicants must satisfy the following conditions, unless specifically exempted by the Executive Committee:

- 4.3.1 Be nominated by a Voting Member of the Society.
- 4.3.2 Sign a statement of their interest in astronomy.
- 4.3.3 Be elected by the Executive Committee.
- 4.3.4 Pay the appropriate annual subscription.

### **4.4 Removal of Membership**

The Executive Committee shall have, at its absolute discretion, the power to remove from membership any person whose conduct at Society functions or elsewhere is objectionable or likely to bring the Society into disrepute. No such member shall have any claim on the Society for monies paid.

## **5 ADMINISTRATION**

### **5.1 President**

A position of 'President' may be filled or remain vacant at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

## **5.2 Executive Committee**

The Society shall be administered by an Executive Committee of six persons elected from & by the voting membership and shall consist of:

- 5.2.1 Chairman.
- 5.2.2 Vice-Chairman.
- 5.2.3 Business Secretary.
- 5.2.4 Meeting Secretary.
- 5.2.5 Membership Secretary.
- 5.2.6 Treasurer.

No person shall hold more than one Executive post at a time but Executive Officers may also hold positions of Section Director or serve on the Observatory sub-committee.

## **5.3 Section Directors**

There shall be Section Directors responsible for:

- 5.3.1 Encouraging and arranging work in their section.
- 5.3.2 Submitting a report at Society meetings when appropriate.
- 5.3.3 Maintaining section records. (See section 11).

Sections may be formed or disbanded according to the needs of the members and may include, amongst others: solar, lunar, planetary, meteors and comets, stellar and deep sky, astronautics, artificial satellites, astrophysics, instruments, newsletter, library.

## **5.4 Other Officers**

The Executive Committee shall elect or appoint from the membership, ex-officio officers such as, librarian, newsletter editor, website manager etc. for the efficient running and promotion of the Society.

## **5.5 Observatory**

There shall be an Observatory sub-committee appointed by the Executive Committee responsible for:

- 5.5.1 Maintenance of the observatory telescope.
- 5.5.2 Supervising and instructing members in the use of the observatory telescope.
- 5.5.3 Preparing a timetable for any programme of work submitted by members.
- 5.5.4 Maintaining an Observatory log.
- 5.5.5 The Committee will make an annual allocation of money to the Observatory Fund to be spent at the discretion of the Observatory sub-committee.
- 5.5.6 Carry out an annual Health and Safety inspection and prepare a report for the Committee.

## **5.6 Auditor**

A non-executive member of the Society shall be appointed as auditor.

## **6 ELECTIONS**

### **6.1 Officers**

The posts of all Executive officers, Section Directors shall be subject to annual re-election at the AGM. All are eligible for re-election indefinitely except the Chairman who shall hold office for not more than three consecutive years and be eligible for re-election after an interval of one year.

### **6.2 Auditor**

The non-executive auditor shall also be elected at the AGM.

### **6.3 Nominations**

Nominations, obtained with the prior consent of the nominee, for the posts of Executive Office, Section Director must be proposed and seconded by voting members. Nominations must be submitted to the Secretary not more than 7 days after the date of the meeting prior to the AGM.

In the event of only one nomination being received then the nominated person shall be elected to the post provided that the election is approved in accordance with sections 8 & 9 of the Constitution.

In the event of more than one nomination being received for any post, voting slips will be circulated to all voting members of the Society not less than seven days before the date of the AGM. To be eligible for counting these voting slips must be returned to the Business Secretary by or at the start of the AGM. Postal votes will be allowed. Proxy votes will not be allowed. Votes will be counted at the AGM. The nominee receiving the most votes will be elected to the post.

#### **6.4 Unfilled/Vacated Posts**

Elections for unfilled or vacated posts may take place at ordinary meetings of the Society provided nominations, proposed and seconded as above, are submitted to the Business Secretary within 7 days of the meeting at which the vacancy is announced.

In the event of only one nomination being received then the nominated person shall be elected to the post, provided that the election is approved in accordance with sections 8 & 9 of the Constitution.

In the event of more than one nomination being received for any post, voting slips will be circulated to all voting members of the Society not less than seven days before the date of the meeting at which the election is to take place. To be eligible for counting these voting slips must be returned to the Business Secretary by or at the start of the meeting. Postal votes will be allowed. Proxy votes will not be allowed. Votes will be counted at the meeting. The nominee receiving the most votes will be elected to the post.

### **7 MEETINGS**

#### **7.1 Annual General Meeting**

An Annual General Meeting shall be held in October of each year.

#### **7.2 Ordinary Meetings**

The Meetings Secretary shall arrange for ordinary meetings of the Society to be held at regular intervals during the year.

#### **7.3 Committee Meetings**

The Business Secretary shall convene committee meetings as necessary for the efficient running of the Society.

#### **7.4 Special General Meetings**

At the request of the Executive Committee or at the written request of at least one sixth of the voting membership of the Society, the Business Secretary shall convene a Special General Meeting of the Society and give one month's notice to members of the date and the nature of the business to be discussed.

#### **7.5 Attendance at Meetings**

All members shall have the right to attend the AGM or SGM and all ordinary meetings of the Society. At the discretion of the Executive Committee, non-members may be allowed to attend up to 3 meetings free of charge whilst they decide whether they wish to apply for membership.

All Executive Committee members shall have the right to attend committee meetings and shall have full voting rights except the Chairman (or acting chairman) who shall have a casting vote only. Section Directors shall have the right to attend committee meetings but shall have no voting rights at these meetings.

### **8 QUORUM**

The quorum at ordinary meetings, the AGM and SGM shall be one third of the voting membership. The quorum at committee meetings shall be any three members of the Executive Committee.

### **9 VOTING**

At all ordinary and committee meetings, the AGM and SGM the Chairman (or Acting Chairman) shall have a casting vote only.

A resolution shall be passed if supported by a simple majority of votes cast provided Section 8 above is satisfied.

## **10 FINANCES**

### **10.1 Administration of Finances**

The Society's financial year shall run from September 1st to August 31st the following year.

The Society shall maintain a suitable bank account into which all monies shall be deposited. The account shall be administered by the Executive Committee, with the day to day running by the Treasurer. The signatories to this account shall be any 2 of the Treasurer and the 2 Executive Committee members nominated by the Executive Committee as signatories.

The Treasurer shall maintain proper accounting records of income and expenditure of the Society, which shall be subject to audit. Copies of un-audited draft accounts shall be circulated to all members not less than 14 days before the AGM. Final audited accounts shall be laid before members at the AGM and shall be adopted if accepted in accordance with sections 8 & 9 of the Constitution.

The Treasurer shall also make available to the members of the Executive Committee a copy of records and supporting bank statements at intervals not exceeding 3 months.

### **10.2 Subscriptions**

Not less than one month before the AGM, the Executive Committee shall put forward a proposal for subscriptions for the year. Such a proposal shall be adopted if passed in accordance with sections 8 & 9 of the Constitution.

Subscriptions must be paid by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting following the AGM. Members in arrears after this date will be deemed to have resigned from the Society. Such persons shall have the right to re-apply for membership of the Society if they so wish.

## **11 RECORDS**

### **11.1 Meetings**

The minutes of the AGM, ordinary meetings, committee meetings and any special general meetings shall be held by the Business Secretary and be available to all members on written request.

### **11.2 Sections**

All Section Directors shall maintain records appropriate to the activities of their section.

### **11.2 Observatory**

The Observatory sub-committee shall maintain an observatory log.

### **11.3 Membership**

A list of members shall be maintained by the Membership Secretary.

## **12 SOCIETY EQUIPMENT & OBSERVATORY**

The Society shall make available equipment that members may use to develop their interest in astronomy. The use of such equipment shall be at the discretion of the Observatory sub-committee, who will arrange a timetable for use with the member(s) concerned. Preference will be given to members who submit written applications of a programme of work to the Observatory sub-committee.

In the event of loss or damage to equipment either belonging to the Society or on loan to the Society, the member(s) responsible shall bear the cost of repair or replacement unless exempted in part or whole by the Executive Committee.

## **13 DISSOLUTION OF THE SOCIETY**

The Society may be dissolved with the approval of not less half of the membership of the Society, at a special general meeting called for that purpose. At the dissolution of the Society all funds and effects of the Society shall be transferred by gift to members of the society or to one or more societies or bodies having similar objectives to those of the Society. Such transfers shall be approved by members attending the meeting at which the dissolution of the Society is agreed.

## **14 PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE**

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for arranging suitable insurance to cover public liability by Society members at Society functions.

## **15 ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

The Business Secretary shall give at least one months notice to all members of the society of any motion, proposed and seconded by members of the Society, which seeks to alter the Constitution.

Such a motion shall be carried if approved at a meeting of the Society.

## **16 CONSTITUTION**

All members shall be provided with a current copy of the Constitution.

## **17 CHILD & VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY**

### **17.1 Definitions**

- 17.1.1 'Child' is defined as a person under 18 years of age.
- 17.1.2 'Vulnerable Adult' is defined by the Government as 'a person aged 18 years or over, who is in receipt of or may be in need of community care services by reason of 'mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'.
- 17.1.4 'Abuse' is defined by the Government as 'violation of an individual's human or civil rights by any other person or persons'. This can include physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, or neglect.
- 17.1.3 For the purposes of this document, the term 'child' can also be read as 'children'. The term 'vulnerable adult' can also be read as 'vulnerable adults'. Unless otherwise stated, any mention of child or children shall automatically also apply to vulnerable adult/s, and vice-versa.

### **17.2 Principles**

- 17.2.1 The Society will take all reasonable steps to provide a safe and secure environment for children when they visit the Observatory or take part in the Society's activities.
- 17.2.2 Any Society member who is, or will be, in contact with children or vulnerable adults must have cleared a check by the Criminal Records Bureau. The Society will ensure this is upheld and maintained.
- 17.2.3 The Society will adhere to the laws relating to children in respect to children visiting the Observatory or taking part in Society activities.
- 17.2.4 Any member noticing the abuse of a child has a legal responsibility to immediately report it to either the Police or the Local Authority Child Services.
- 17.2.5 Any member witnessing abuse on the Society's premises and/or during its activities, who is unsure about abuse, or to whom to report such matters, should discuss the issue with an Executive Officer of the Society who will, if necessary, seek advice and act accordingly.
- 17.2.6 At no time will any member of the Society act 'in loco parentis'.
- 17.2.7 Future decisions regarding policy or the activities of the Society will be mindful of, and not contradict, the principles of safeguarding children.

### **17.3 Society Activities**

- 17.3.1 Children must be accompanied and supervised by a parent (or guardian) at all times when undertaking Society activities.
- 17.3.2 The parent (or guardian) remains responsible at all times for the safety, security, and actions of their child.
- 17.3.5 The Society requires a maximum of two children per adult whilst at the Observatory. The Observatory is a dark site, and therefore requires a higher level of supervision to ensure safety.
- 17.3.4 If organisations (such as Scouts, Cubs, Guides, Brownies, etc) partake in Society activities, it is the responsibility of the visiting organisation to ensure that there are sufficient accompanying adults, and that these adults have been vetted in accordance with the latest legislation as being suitable to work with children. The Society takes no responsibility for the vetting or supervision of third parties.
- 17.3.5 Any party or organisation not adhering to the above terms will not be admitted to Society activities (including the Observatory).

**17.4 Revision**

This policy will be reviewed annually, or more frequently in the light of any experience, legislative change or guidance issued.

**18 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

The Society is fully committed to maintaining an environment in which the interest and science of astronomy is paramount. We will ensure that no member (or applicant for membership) is treated less favourably on the grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, age, religion or belief, or any other condition which cannot be justified in membership terms.

**AMENDMENTS**

<b>Amendment Detail</b>	<b>Amendment Date</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Constitution	Adopted January 1992	March 1992
Section 5.2	March 2003	October 2003
Sections 4.1.4, 5.4, 7.2 & 7.3, 7.5	April 2006	April 2006
Section 10.2	July 2007	July 2007
Section 4.2	February 2008	February 2008
Sections 17 & 18	February 2009	March 2009