



Hertford Astronomy Group Constitution

Adopted Wednesday 14th May 2014

1.0 Name

1.1 The name shall be the "Hertford Astronomy Group", hereinafter referred to as 'the Group'.

2.0 Objectives

2.1 To promote and advance the education of its members and members of the public in the science of Astronomy.

3.0 Powers

3.1 In furtherance of this object, the Group will:

3.1.1 Hold regular public meetings using lectures, discussions, films and any other means open to the Group.

3.1.2 Provide facilities for those members who wish to study astronomy.

3.1.3 Affiliate with other groups of amateur or professional astronomers.

4.0 Membership

4.1 Membership is open to anyone over the age of 17 who pays the subscription set by the Annual General Meeting which shall fall due on 1 August.

4.2 Honorary Membership may be given for service to the Group or to the science of astronomy.

4.3 Nominations for Honorary membership shall be made to the Management Committee of the Group but must be ratified by the Annual General Meeting.

5.0 Management Committee

5.1 The management of the Group shall be vested in the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and whatever group of members shall be determined to constitute a Committee by the Annual General Meeting.

5.2 The Committee shall have powers of co-option

5.3 The management of the Group, including the control of expenditure and the recommendation of subscription, shall be in the hands of the Committee.

5.4 Any vacancy in the Officers shall be temporarily filled at the discretion of the Committee, until the next Annual General Meeting.

5.5 The Officers of the Group shall be the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Programme Secretary.

6.0 Auditors

6.1 The Annual General Meeting shall appoint an auditor who shall not be a member of the Management Committee.

7.0 Termination of Membership

7.1 If at any time the Committee considers that the interests of the Group require it, they may invite a member to withdraw from the Group, by a letter specifying the time before which the withdrawal should be made.

7.2 If the member concerned does not withdraw, the Committee must submit the question of the member's expulsion to an Extraordinary General Meeting to be held within 6 (six) weeks after the date of the letter.

7.3 The Committee must inform the member in question of the time and place of the meeting and the nature of the complaints against them in sufficient time to afford them a proper opportunity of offering their explanation.

7.4 At the meeting, the member must be allowed to offer an explanation of their conduct verbally or in writing and if, after that, 2/3 two-thirds of the members present vote for his expulsion the member will immediately cease to be a member of the Group.

7.5 If membership is terminated by the Group as described above, then all joint ownership of monies, assets or equipment shall cease from the date of termination and any and all rights and entitlements shall pass to the remaining members of the Group. (see 12.6 below)

8.0 Number of Meetings and Subscriptions

8.1 The Group shall meet at least 10 times per year from September. The Annual General Meeting shall be held in May. The Group will normally meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, unless otherwise decided by the Committee and the members.

8.2 An Annual subscription will be charged for membership. The rate to be determined by the committee and ratified at the AGM each year.

8.3 Members joining partway through the year shall be charged at the appropriate rate pro-rata to the nearest whole month.

8.4 Any members failing to pay or renew their annual subscriptions shall cease to hold joint ownership of any monies, assets or equipment and any and all rights and entitlements shall pass to the remaining members of the Group. (See 12.6 below)

8.5 Anyone under the age of 17 may attend meetings free of charge provided they are accompanied by a responsible adult.

8.6 In recognition of the work & commitment involved, serving members of the Management Committee shall optionally be exempted from the requirement to pay the annual subscription.

9.0 Subscription in Arrears

9.1 If any member fails to pay their annual subscription on or before 31 October, notice must be sent to them calling their attention to the failure to pay.

10.0 Election of Officers and Committee

10.1 Any position on the Committee (including the Officers) shall be for a term of one year unless personal circumstances dictate otherwise.

10.2 Nominations for Office or Committee shall be made in writing to the Chairman.

10.3 Elections shall be made at the Annual General Meeting.

10.4 Candidates for election shall be present when their nomination is considered except as may be agreed otherwise by the Chairman.

10.5 Votes for elections shall be made by a show of hands or by secret ballot at the discretion of the Chairman.

10.6 Nominations must be received two weeks prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting.

10.7 All nominated candidates shall have attained the age of eighteen years.

10.8 All nominated candidates shall have paid their annual subscription.

10.9 A simple majority vote shall decide those elected.

11.0 Management Meetings

11.1 The Management Committee shall meet as required.

11.2 At a Management Committee Meeting, the quorum shall be four, at least two of whom shall be from the Officers.

11.3 Voting at the Committee shall be by a show of hands

11.4 A simple majority vote shall decide any motion.

12.0 Finance

12.1 The Group's accounting year shall commence from 1st April and end on 31st March.

12.2 The funds of the Group shall be managed by the Treasurer who will produce the audited accounts at the Annual General Meeting.

12.3 The Treasurer will produce a statement of the Group's accounts for the attention of any Officer on the Committee if so requested.

12.4 The Treasurer will produce the Group's accounts at each Committee meeting. If unable to attend such meetings, an up to date statement of the Group's accounts will be provided to the Chairman and Secretary with further copies for Committee members at the meeting.

12.5 The income and property of the Group howsoever derived will be used solely to promote the Group as set out in this Constitution.

12.6 The "Group" has the legal status of "an unincorporated body" and as such cannot be considered a legal entity in itself. Therefore, all monies and assets are the joint property of its members. The members therefore are both collectively and individually legally responsible for any debts or liabilities pertaining to, or incurred by the "Group".

12.7 The Committee will take out Public Liability Insurance and Member to Member Insurance on behalf of the Group through its membership of the Federation of Astronomical Societies, or by commercial means as should be deemed appropriate.

12.8 The group will maintain a surplus balance in its bank account at all times sufficient to cover the cost of any insurance excess. If at any time this requirement is not met then the committee will report to the Group at the first possible opportunity with proposals for remedying the position.

12.9 No member of the Group shall enter into any contract on behalf of the Group or affect changes to the Hertfordshire Astronomy Group facilities or carry out any work on behalf of the Group without the prior consent of the Committee.

12.10 The Group may receive donations, grants-in-aid or financial guarantees.

13.0 Annual General Meetings

13.1 Notice of an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and its Agenda shall be sent to all Members at least 14 days prior to the date of the AGM.

13.2 A motion shall be carried by a simple majority vote.

13.3 The method of voting shall be at the discretion of the Chairman

13.4 The Chairman shall have no vote except in the case of a tie when the Chairman shall have the casting vote.

13.5 The Annual General Meeting shall be held within the first two months of the Group's financial year which will begin on April 1st each year..

13.6 The AGM shall receive the reports from the Officers on the year's work and the audited accounts.

14.0 Extraordinary General Meeting

14.1 An Extraordinary General meeting of the Group may only be convened by the Committee.

14.2 An Extraordinary General meeting of the Group shall be convened by the Committee the written request of 6 (six) or more of the members.

15.0 Alterations to this Constitution

15.1 This Constitution shall only be changed by a 2/3 (two-thirds) vote of members present at the Annual General Meeting.

15.2 Notice of proposed changes shall be sent to all Members at least 14 days before the date of such meeting giving such details and the reasons for the proposed changes.

16.0 Winding up of the Hertford Astronomy Group

16.1 Should the Group be wound up for any reason, the complete assets of the Group, including the balances of any funds, shall be given or transferred to some other institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Group, and which prohibits the distribution of its or their income and property amongst its membership.

16.2 Such institution or institutions shall be determined by the Group membership at or before the time of dissolution, and if and so far as effect cannot be given to this provision, then to some charitable object.

Amended 8th June 2011

Amended 14th May 2014

Amended May 2021