



# **CONSTITUTION**

**OF**

**SAGAS**

**Southern Area Group of Astronomical Societies**

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**Phil Alner (Cody) and John Stapleton (Basingstoke)**

## **TITLE**

The organisation shall be called “Southern Area Group of Astronomical Societies”.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Group are to foster the interests of and educate its members in matters relating to astronomy; and in the furtherance of these objectives, the Group shall, among other things:-

- (a) Act as a central point of contact, reference and forum for Astronomical Societies in the South of England area.
- (b) Encourage liaison and shared good practice between all Astronomical Societies, whether they are members of the Group or not, in part by maintaining a website for the purpose.
- (c) Promote and encourage all aspects of astronomy for all levels.
- (d) Provide opportunities for learning and the exchange of information between members via meetings and events.

## **RULES, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES OF THE GROUP**

### **1. MEMBERSHIP**

The Group shall consist of a Committee and Member Astronomy Societies.

- (a) **Committee**  
The committee shall consist of at least five members but not more than eight who must represent different member societies, where possible.  
(See 6.1)
- (b) **Member Astronomical Societies**  
Membership of the Group is open to all sole and distinctive societies in the southern area catchment.

***NB:** - within this constitution / document, the SAGAS organisation is referred as the **Group**, Member Societies will be referred to as **Members** and individual persons will be referred to as **Society Delegates**.*

### **2. APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

- 2.1 Applications for election to membership of the Group shall be made in writing, signed by the Secretary of the applicant society, to the Secretary of the Group, who shall submit the same to the Committee for its decision. The Group Secretary shall send notice of election or rejection to the applicant. Every Member Society shall, on election, be provided with a copy of this Constitution.

- 2.2 Membership of the Group shall take effect on receipt by the Treasurer of the required subscription.

### **3. SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Members shall pay an annual subscription to the Group, the amount of that shall be determined at the Annual General Meeting of the Group. Subject to their annual subscription being paid, each Member shall be entitled to vote at General Meetings of the Group and to receive the full benefits of the Group.

(See rule 14)

### **4. PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS**

The first subscription of a Member shall become due to be paid to the Treasurer on receipt of a notice of election to membership. All subsequent annual subscriptions shall become due on 1st April and shall be paid by the end of July that year. The Committee may determine arrangements or amounts due in respect of Members joining the Group partway through the subscription year.

### **5. NON-PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS**

The Committee shall have the power, by resolution, to suspend any Member whose subscription remains unpaid after 1st August from access to any of the benefits of membership until the subscription has been paid or, at its discretion, to terminate the membership of such Member.

### **6. MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 The Group shall be managed by a Committee consisting of a Chairman, a Treasurer, a Secretary and up to five other committee members, all of the Committee being paid up members of Member Societies.

The Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary shall be the executive committee and shall each be a delegate of a different Society. The Chairman will normally stand down after three years.

- 6.2 The Committee shall have the power to fill any vacancies on the Committee until the next Annual General Meeting and to co-opt additional Members as may be necessary from time to time. The **quorum** at Committee meetings shall be a majority of the committee members and must include two members from the Executive.

- 6.3 No individual committee member or any Group Member shall enter into any contract on behalf of the Group without permission of the Committee.

- 6.5 The Committee shall have the power to carry out changes to the rules except those which can only be dealt with at a General Meeting, and to call a General Meeting where such changes may be expedited.

## **7. MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE**

The first meeting of the SAGAS Committee shall be called by the Secretary (after consultation with the Chairman) as soon as possible after the Annual General Meeting and before the Next Ordinary Meeting. Subsequent meetings shall be called by the Secretary as resolved by the Committee or, failing such resolution, at the discretion of the Chairman and the Secretary. At least seven days before a planned meeting the Secretary shall notify all Committee members of the agenda, date, time and location of the meeting together with a copy of the minutes and actions from the previous meeting.

## **8. POWERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Committee shall have the power:

- (a) to decide any question arising out of this Constitution, to deal with all other matters connected with the Group (except those which can only be dealt with by the Group at General Meetings) and to make, publish and maintain all necessary orders, regulations and procedures in connection therewith;
- (b) to agree Terms of Reference of its Officers and the duties to be undertaken by other members of the Committee;
- (c) to appoint sub-committees and to delegate to such sub-committees any of its powers other than those appertaining to the management of the Group. Any sub-committee appointed may not continue to hold office after the conclusion of the following Annual General Meeting without its appointment being confirmed by the Committee elected at that Annual General Meeting;
- (d) to determine arrangements or amounts due in respect of Members joining the Group part-way through the subscription year;
- (e) to elect new Members under Rule 2
- (f) to nominate a representative to the Council of the Federation of Astronomical Societies;
- (g) To set, annually, the amount of charge levied on visitors and non-members.

## **FINANCE**

### **9. FINANCIAL YEAR**

The Financial Year of the Group, in respect of which independently audited accounts will be presented at the following Annual General Meeting, shall extend from 1st April in each year to the following 31st March.

### **10. BANK ACCOUNT**

The Group shall operate a bank account from which no funds shall be withdrawn without the authority of any two of the Executive, i.e. the Chairman, the Treasurer and the Secretary.

### **11. EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS**

The funds of the Group shall be applied solely to the stated objectives of the Group. No Member or committee member shall receive payment directly or indirectly for services to the Group other than for proper costs incurred on the authority of the Committee in purchasing items or defraying other costs for the Group. Any committee members with a pecuniary interest must declare that interest before any discussion and must absent themselves from any vote. Any profit made by the Group shall be re-invested in the Group and shall not be distributed to Members.

## **MEETINGS**

### **12. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS**

The function of General Meetings shall be as Ordinary Meetings but with the additional function of providing the membership with the opportunity to partake in the running of the Group by allowing discussion and voting rights on decisions regarding policy, rulings, alterations to this constitution and expenditure

12.1 The Annual General Meeting of the Group shall be held during the month of April in each year.

12.2 The Agenda shall include the following items:-

- (a) apologies for absence.
- (b) presentation for approval of the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting and of any Extraordinary General Meetings held since the previous Annual General Meeting.
- (c) presentation by the Chairman of a report on the Group's activities during the previous year.

- (d) presentation by the Treasurer for approval of the accounts for the previous Financial Year, which shall have been independently audited. Also recommend the cost of subscriptions for the following year.
- (e) elections:
  - (i) a new Committee consisting of the Executive (Rule 6.1) and up to five other members;
  - (ii) a person who shall audit the accounts of the Group, who shall be neither a member of the retiring Committee nor a member of the new Committee
  - (iii) a representative to the Council of the Federation of Astronomical Societies.
- (f) any other business.

12.3 The new Committee may make appointments to any positions remaining vacant at the end of the meeting.

12.4 The period of service of those elected at an Annual General Meeting shall be the interval between one Annual General Meeting and the next. However, if no nominations are forthcoming the standing committee may be re-elected for a further term.

12.5 Motions to be considered at the AGM should be submitted, in writing, to the committee at least two months prior to the AGM and thence distributed to the membership at least six weeks prior to the AGM. However nominations may be made in person on the day, as required.

### **13. EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS**

An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Group may be held at any time at the discretion of the Committee or shall be held within eight weeks after the receipt by the Secretary of a request in writing to that effect, signed by at least fifteen fully paid-up Members. Every such request shall specify the business for which the meeting is to be convened and no other business shall be transacted.

### **14. RESOLUTIONS AT GENERAL MEETINGS**

Resolutions, including elections, shall be by ballot or show of hands as may be decided by the meeting. Unless otherwise provided by this Constitution all resolutions brought forward at a General Meeting shall be decided by a bare majority of the votes properly recorded at such meeting and in the case of equality of votes, the resolution shall be deemed not to have been passed. If at any General Meeting there were any dispute as to the interpretation of this Constitution then the decision of the Executive Committee shall be final.

Any paid up Society member can be nominated as a Delegate to represent their Society and vote on its behalf. Only one Delegate from each society attending may

vote at the meeting, or a nominated person may be authorised to hold another Society's proxy. Proxy voting will only be necessary for fundamental changes, to be decided by the Committee.

## **15. ORDINARY MEETINGS**

The function of Ordinary Meetings shall be to provide a shared forum for the Member Societies to meet and network with each other, to share successes and good practise and to advertise forthcoming events within the Group.

- (a) Ordinary meetings will be held quarterly.
- (b) Ordinary meetings will be chaired by Member Societies in rotation.
- (c) Notice of every Ordinary Meeting, together with its Agenda, shall be sent to each current Member at least six weeks prior to the date fixed for such meetings.
- (d) Extraordinary Meeting procedures to take place at an otherwise Ordinary Meeting should do so under the temporary Chairmanship of the Group Committee.

## **16. QUORUM AT ORDINARY MEETINGS**

No business, other than the formal adjournment of the Meeting, shall be transacted at any ordinary Meeting unless a quorum be present and such quorum shall consist of not less than 20% of the number of paid-up Members of the Group (including any proxy vote).

## **17. DISSOLUTION OF THE GROUP**

The Group shall only be dissolved by resolution passed by a majority of at least five-sixths of the Members present and voting at an Extraordinary General Meeting called for the purpose of considering such dissolution. In the event of dissolution any balance of cash remaining in hand after the realisation of assets and payment of debts shall not be distributed among Members of the Group but shall be donated to an association with similar aims, e.g. the Federation of Astronomical Societies or one of its regional groups.

## **18. ALTERATIONS TO CONSTITUTION**

No alteration to this Constitution shall be made except at a General Meeting in which the proposed alteration is included on the Agenda and the resolution embodying the same is carried by a majority of 75% of the votes recorded thereon at the meeting.