

Cambridge University Astronomical Society

Constitution

[Adopted March 2023]

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A. Foundations

1. The Name of the Society

The Name of the Society shall be: 'Cambridge University Astronomical Society'.

2. The Objects of the Society

The Society exists to provide for and to encourage an interest in Astronomy among members and associates of the University of Cambridge ('the University').

3. The Activities of the Society

- (i) The Society shall organise meetings held during University Terms, for talks, discussions, etc. and shall provide opportunities for visits to the University Observatories, with demonstrations and such facilities furthering its objects.
- (ii) The Society may affiliate to or participate in the activities of any other body as may seem fitting to a Full Committee Meeting.

4. Membership of the Society

- (i) Membership of the Society shall be open to all members of the University of Cambridge and of Anglia Ruskin University and to others at the discretion of the Committee, who pay the subscription of the Society.
- (ii) Membership to current students (undergraduate or graduate) at the University of Cambridge or Anglia Ruskin University may be given for a limited time or for life. Membership to all other applicants cannot be given for more than three years without being subject to renewal.
- (iii) Life membership is immutable save by the provision clause 15(i).

5. The Subscription of the Society

- (i) The Subscription of the Society shall be fixed by a Full Committee Meeting.
- (ii) An Ordinary Committee Meeting may waive payment of the subscription by persons whom they propose to elect to the Senior Committee.

6. Annual General Meeting

There shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Society in each academic year towards the end of Full Lent Term. All members shall be given at least two weeks' notice. At the Meeting the Chair shall report on the state of the Society, and the Treasurer shall present a financial account, to be open for inspection at the Meeting.

7. Cases of Dispute

- (i) A member may at any time require further investigation into a matter of Society business. If a serious dispute arises, the matter shall be referred to the President for arbitration. The President may call for a decision by ballot at any Meeting of the Society, at least five days' notice of the ballot having been given.
- (ii) The Society's only disciplinary sanctions are to expel or to suspend a member whose actions are felt to be such as to bring the Society into disrepute, or to adversely affect the smooth running of the Society in a major way. Such expulsion or suspension can only be effected by a majority vote of all Executive Committee members, excluding the Senior Treasurer. In the event of an expulsion, the excluded member is required to return all equipment, documents and finances belonging to the Society within 7 days. They will not be entitled to any full or partial refund of annual subscriptions.
- (iii) If the excluded or suspended member wishes to appeal the decision, that appeal should be made to the Senior Treasurer, who will consider all the facts, and whose decision will be final. An appeal as to the process of exclusion, but not a further investigation into the facts, may be lodged with the Junior Proctor.

B. The Committee

8. The Committee of the Society

- (i) The affairs of the Society shall be managed by a committee, hereinafter referred to as the Full Committee, elected by members of the Society, and composing of the Senior, Executive and Advisory Committee.
- (ii) All members of the Committee are members of the Society and will generally be members of the University or Anglia Ruskin University. Any Committee member may resign at any time. Except as provided in clause 10(iii) any Committee member shall be eligible for re-election.

9. The Senior Committee

- (i) The Senior Committee shall consist of a President, a Senior Treasurer and the Vice-President(s). The Senior Treasurer shall be a member of the Regent House, or other person approved by the Junior Proctor.
- (ii) In the case of election to the Senior Committee, an Ordinary Committee Meeting shall recommend a person for election (by simple majority nominating the President or Senior Treasurer; by a two-thirds majority for Vice-Presidents). The recommendation shall be placed before the next Meeting of the Society for majority approval.
- (iii) The President and Senior Treasurer are reaffirmed yearly at the AGM by majority vote.
- (iv) The Vice-Presidents are honorary lifetime appointments, conferring no particular responsibility or precedence, given in recognition of achievement in the field of astronomy, or significant or long-standing contributions to the society.

10. The Executive Committee

- (i) The Executive Committee shall consist of not less than five and not more than ten members, who must be studying for a degree of status equal to or below a PhD for the duration of their tenure and include a Chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer (the Officers).
- (ii) The executive committee members must be current members of the University or Anglia-Ruskin University. A majority of the elected members must be full-time undergraduate or postgraduate students of the University of Cambridge.
- (iii) No person may serve on the Executive Committee for more than three years, consecutive or otherwise.
- (iv) Members of the Executive Committee shall continue in office after the end of the AGM until the end of the Lent Term.
- (v) For so long as the Society shall be Registered with the Junior Proctor, it shall be the duty of the Executive Committee to ensure that the Society complies with the requirements for Registration as a University Society.

11. The Advisory Committee

- (i) The Advisory Committee shall consist of members who have served on the Executive Committee at least once if they are of BA status and at least twice otherwise.

- (ii) The Executive and Advisory Committees together shall not exceed thirteen members.
- (iii) Members of the Advisory Committee shall be elected by an Ordinary Committee Meeting.
- (iv) Members of the Advisory Committee shall be in office the same period as the Executive Committee.

12. Procedure for Nomination and Election to the Executive Committee

- (i) All members of the Executive Committee shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting.
- (ii) Nominations must be proposed and seconded by at least two members of the Society and authenticated by the signature of the nominee. Nominations must be communicated to the Chair. All Resident members must be given notice of at least one week of Full Term of a closing time for nominations. A member may be nominated for but may not hold more than one Office. The Chair must ensure that there are sufficient nominations to satisfy clause 10(i).
- (iii) For each office or general membership, an election shall be held by secret ballot, each member present having one vote. Re-open Nominations (RON) shall also be an option in each election and shall require a majority to be chosen in the same way as a candidate. In the event of no candidate securing a majority, the candidate at the bottom of the poll shall be eliminated and a second ballot held. This procedure shall be repeated until a candidate achieves an absolute majority.
- (iv) If RON wins election to an office, nominations for that position shall be re-opened, and a new election shall be held at a Meeting of the Society, following the rules in clauses 12a(ii) and (iii).
- (v) For each general membership vacancy, all candidates that wish to stand for a general membership stand in each election. until they are a) elected to a position, b) withdraw from the race, c) all vacancies are filled, d) RON wins the election. If RON wins election to a general membership then no further elections for general memberships shall be held unless clause 10(i) is not satisfied, in which case an election shall be held as in clause 12(iv) above.
- (vi) The election shall proceed in the order: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, other positions.

- (vii) If any stage of an election results in a tie, the tie shall be broken by the first person in the following order who is present and not standing in that election: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, President, Senior Treasurer.

12a. Vacancies and Urgency Appointment

- (i) If a vacancy arises for an Officer for reasons other than clause 12(iv), a Full Committee Meeting shall elect a member of the Executive Committee to that Office.
- (ii) In a matter of urgency, the President may in consultation with such members of the Committee as conveniently available appoint a new officer. In the event of the President being unable to act, the Senior Treasurer, or failing them a Vice-President shall act in their place.
- (iii) Any other vacancy on the Executive Committee may be filled either by co-option or by election. Co-option: Any Ordinary Committee Meeting may vote to co-opt a member to fill a vacancy subject to confirmation by a vote at the next Meeting of the Society. Election: An Ordinary Committee Meeting may decide to fill a vacancy on the Executive Committee by election at any Meeting of the Society. The rule for nomination shall be identical to the ones at an Annual General Meeting.

13. Convening of Committee Meetings

Committee Meetings may be convened by the President, the Senior Treasurer, the Chair or by any two Committee members acting together. All Resident members of the Full Committee shall be given at least five days' notice of all Committee Meetings.

14. Procedure at Committee Meetings

- (i) An Ordinary Committee Meeting shall be a meeting of not less than half of the total membership of the Executive Committee.
- (ii) A Full Committee Meeting shall be an Ordinary Committee Meeting with the presence of at least one member of the Senior Committee.
- (iii) A Full Committee Meeting (the Annual Full Committee Meeting) shall be held shortly before the Annual General Meeting.
- (iv) If a Full Committee Meeting is convened during an Ordinary Committee Meeting to consider a decision made thereat, such decision shall not be implemented until it has received the approval of a Full Committee Meeting.

- (v) Mandatory attendees of a meeting (a Senior Committee member for a Full Committee Meeting and Officers) shall appoint a deputy if they are unable to attend.

15. Powers of the Committee

- (i) A Full Committee Meeting is the final authority within the Society except when provisioned by clause 7. It shall have the power to refuse membership of the Society or to require a member who shall seem to it unsuited to be such to resign from the Society. A Full Committee Meeting is ipso facto an Ordinary Committee Meeting.
- (ii) Ordinary Committee Meetings are responsible for the daily running of the Society in carrying out its objectives in manner, which they deem appropriate.
- (iii) An Ordinary Committee Meeting may create, and appoint members to, such minor offices as they may deem appropriate. Minor Officers shall not, ex-officio, be members of the Committee. The duration of office shall not exceed the life of the Committee concerned.
- (iv) An Ordinary Committee Meeting may delegate any of its powers, except those of clause 12, 15(iii) and 15(iv), to a stated person for a stated period of time not to exceed the life of the Committee concerned.

C. The Officers

16. Duties of the Chair

- (i) The Chair shall preside at all Meetings of the Society and Committee.
- (ii) In the absence of a decision to the contrary, the Chair shall possess all the powers of an Ordinary Committee Meeting, except those of clauses 12 and 15(iv), except when such is in session.

17. Duties of the Secretary

- (i) The Secretary shall ensure that all Resident members of the Full Committee have appropriate notice of all Committee Meetings.
- (ii) The Secretary shall take minutes of the Annual General Meeting, Committee Meetings and of business transacted at Meetings of the Society.
- (iii) At a Committee Meeting the Secretary shall, unless otherwise directed by the Meeting, read all unsigned Minutes of previous

Committee Meetings of the like sort. The minutes (amended if necessary) must be adopted by a simple majority and authenticated by the signature of the Chair.

- (iv) The Secretary shall keep safe the records of the Society, other than the financial records, and shall add to these, in particular, details of the meetings held, the minutes recorded, and business reports presented during their term of office.

18. Duties of the Treasurers

- (i) The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the income and expenditure of the Society and shall have these available for inspection by any member of the Society at notice of five days of Full Term.
- (ii) The Treasurer shall also keep safe the financial records of the Society.
- (iii) The Treasurer shall make a report at the Annual Full Committee Meeting and at the Annual General Meeting and at any other Committee Meeting before which a Committee member shall have given five days' notice that a report will be required. The Treasurer shall present the completed accounts to the Senior Treasurer for audit not later than the end of Easter Term.
- (iv) The Treasurer shall draw up a budget at the beginning of the academic year covering anticipated income and expenditure. A Full Committee Meeting must accept the budget. The Treasurer must give notice of serious deviation from the budget to the members of the Full Committee Meeting.

19. The Monies of the Society

- (i) The Monies of the Society may be deposited in Bank accounts or kept in such manner as a Full Committee Meeting may decide with a two thirds majority. Members of the Full Committee shall be given at least five days' notice that this matter is to be considered.
- (ii) The Chair and the Treasurer shall have the power to sign cheques and to withdraw money. They should consult the Senior Treasurer on any occasion when the financial affairs of the Society give concern or require unusual expenditure.
- (iii) The Senior Treasurer shall not be liable for any financial debt or other obligation of the Society unless personally authorised such a debt in writing.

20. Limitation of Expenditure

The income and property of the Society shall be applied solely to the expressed objects of the Society, and no portion thereof shall be paid or made over, directly or indirectly, to any member of the Society except in reimbursement of expenses or material liability incurred on behalf of the Society.

D. Final Clauses

21. The Constitution

- (i) The Constitution shall be made available to any member who gives the Chair five days' notice that they wish to inspect it.
- (ii) Amendments to the constitution may be made only by a two-thirds majority at a Full Committee Meeting and must be confirmed by a two-thirds majority at a Meeting of the Society. Any member of the Society may require the Committee to consider specific amendments. Five days' notice that amendments to the constitution are to be discussed must be given to all persons in residence entitled to vote at the respective meetings.
- (iii) No amendment to this Constitution intended to remove the position of Senior Treasurer, to alter its prerogatives and duties, or to change the criteria and procedure for the appointment of a Senior Treasurer can be put to a vote without the prior written agreement of the Junior Proctor of the University of Cambridge.

22. Dissolution

- (i) A unanimous decision of a Full Committee meeting may initiate the dissolution of the society and only with the conviction that there are no persons willing to manage the affairs of the society.
- (ii) The motion of dissolution must contain a provision that the monies of the society remaining after all liabilities have been met shall be entrusted to an appropriate university body, with the condition that in due time a successor society sharing the spirit of clauses 2 and 3 be duly supported.
- (iii) The vote of dissolution will be put before a Meeting of the society occurring during Full Term; the members being informed at least twenty-eight days of the matter. A majority of three-fourths is necessary to pass the vote.

23. Interpretation

- (i) Any reference to a Meeting of the Society in any clause shall mean a meeting held in full term of which all Resident members of more than

seven days standing have been given at least 24 hours' notice that business is to be transacted thereat.

- (ii) Any reference to a majority in any clause shall mean a majority of those present and voting. Unless otherwise stated a simple majority is referred to in all references of majorities or voting.
- (iii) At an Ordinary or Full Committee Meeting or any other meeting of the Society the Chair shall have the casting vote in the event of a tie, except for elections in which they are a candidate.
- (iv) The Advisory Committee shall have a single vote at any Committee Meeting, and this shall count as such for the purpose of evaluating majorities.

24. Use of the Telescopes

- (i) The management and care of the Northumberland and Thorrowgood telescopes is the responsibility of the Institute of Astronomy and any problems should immediately be reported to the designated member of staff. The use of them and their associated accessories by members of the Society is a privilege which should not be abused. When it is necessary for either of these telescopes to be taken out of service for maintenance do not attempt to move them.
- (ii) Non-members who are interested in using the telescopes should approach the Chair for details of joining and obtaining an observing card. If they are members of the IoA, advise them to attend two demonstration evenings. Observing Cards may be awarded to all those who have attended two demonstration evenings and passed their test successfully. The test should demonstrate their ability to take care of the telescopes and prevent them from damage while in use.
- (iii) If a visiting party consisting of more than five persons would like to visit the domes for a guided tour or a one-off observing night, they should approach the Chair. The Chair should arrange for at least three members of the Committee to accompany the group.

Adopted at the Meeting of the Society held on 1964 February 26

Revisions with addition of clause 20(v) adopted at the Meeting of the Society on 1967 March 13

Revisions to clause 10 on 1975 February 26

Revisions with addition of clause 21(i-iii) adopted at the Meeting of the Society on 2000 March 1

Revisions to clause 9(iv) on 2002 March 6

Various undocumented changes made between 2002 and 2009

Addition of clauses 8a, 12a, 18a, 18b on 2009 March

Revisions to clause 18(iii) on 2016 March 9, document becomes v5c

Revisions to clauses 6, 8a, 9(iv), 10(i), 12(iii-vii), 21(ii) and 22(i-iii), removal of gendered language, including Clause 21(i), and renumbering of contents page on 2019 March, document becomes v6a
Revisions to clauses 10(i), 11(ii), 14(i) and 14(iii) and reformatting on 2022 February 28, document becomes v6b

Revisions made to original clauses 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 18a, 19 at the request of the Junior Proctor; document becomes v7. The opportunity was then taken to renumber clauses to give numerical continuity.