



## CONSTITUTION

**NB: Although this Constitution is the Society's current working document, it remains provisional and subject to review by the committee until it is formally adopted.**

1 The NAME of the Society shall be HEATHFIELD and DISTRICT BONFIRE SOCIETY, hereinafter also termed the Society or HDBS. The Committee shall have the authority to change the name as necessary to further the aims of the Society.

2 The AIM of the Society is to bring together the community in the following ways:-

2.1 To work together in co-operation with the relevant statutory authorities and other organisations in both the private and voluntary sectors to hold an annual torchlight procession and bonfire in the Heathfield district.

2.2 To seek to parade in processions held by other societies in the area.

2.3 To hold appropriate social events, particularly of a fund-raising nature.

3 MEMBERSHIP will be subject to current membership rules as laid down by the committee.

3.1 Membership is open to any appropriate person interested in supporting the aims and subject to approval by the committee. Subject to the rules, membership will not unreasonably be withheld.

3.2 Members over the age of 16 will be entitled to vote at general meetings.

3.3 Membership may be terminated by the committee in accordance with the membership rules.

4 ADMINISTRATION and ORGANISATION of the Society shall be entirely in the hands of the Committee, which shall meet at least once every three months. The committee shall operate within the terms of this Constitution and shall have complete authority regarding its interpretation and construction.

5 COMMITTEE

5.1 The COMMITTEE

5.1.1 the Committee shall consist of the four officers and up to four other members, all of whom shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting.

5.1.2 Their normal tenure of office will be from the AGM until the following AGM.

5.1.3 The officers shall consist of Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer and Safety Officer.

5.1.4 The committee may appoint additional Officers at its discretion eg Vice-Chairperson(s), Liaison, Fund-raising, Child Protection, Bonfire, Fireworks, Procession etc.

5.1.5 These additional officers will only become members of the committee and entitled to vote if already elected to the committee or adopted as in paragraph 5.3.

5.1.6 These additional appointments cease by default at the AGM and will be re-made by the new committee at its discretion.

5.1.7 A quorum shall be four persons, two of whom must be officers.

5.2 Committee members and officers shall not be eligible for re-election for one year after holding the same position for three consecutive years. They shall be eligible for other positions.

5.3 The Committee shall be empowered to fill by adoption any casual vacancy in the committee until the next Annual General Meeting.

5.3.1 The Committee shall also have power to co-opt for particular purposes and to seek professional advice.

5.3.2 Persons co-opted to the Committee shall be either members of the Society, who will have full voting rights, or other persons who shall not.

5.3.3 Voting members of the committee, including Ex Officio members, must be paid-up members of the Society.

5.4 If a committee member fails to attend three consecutive committee meetings without communicating acceptable reasons for absence to the committee, then that member will be deemed to have resigned from the committee.

5.5 All members of the founding committee will become EX OFFICIO committee members for life.

5.5.1 Ex Officio members may choose not to take part in the routine running of the Society, but, provided that their subscriptions are up-to-date, they may attend any General Meeting or Committee Meeting, where they may exercise full voting rights and may also choose to receive copies of all agendas, sets of minutes, reports and any correspondence to members which are issued by the Committee

5.6 The chairperson of a Committee meeting has a personal vote and in the event of a tied vote also has a casting vote.

6 POWERS: in furtherance of the AIMS (clause 2 above), but not otherwise, the Committee may exercise the following powers:-

6.1 To raise funds and to receive contributions, provided that, in raising funds, the Committee shall not undertake any substantial, permanent trading activities and shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law.

6.2 To co-operate with other voluntary bodies and bonfire societies, charities and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the aims or of similar charitable purposes and to exchange information and advice with them.

6.3 To maintain a set of Membership Rules.

6.4 To maintain a Health and Safety Policy.

6.5 To Maintain a Child Protection Policy.

6.6 To maintain a Data Protection Policy.

6.7 To determine the appropriateness of any activity or theme proposed by participants for the events organized or attended by the Society and to exclude it if considered contrary to the aims or not in the best interests of the Society. The decision of the committee will be final in this respect.

6.8 Arrange other social and fund-raising activities or to participate in events held by other organizations.

7 FINANCES

7.1 Payments or benefits: members who undertake activities for the Society may be paid reasonable reimbursement for expenses incurred as agreed by the Committee.

7.2.1 Receipts and Payments: the funds of the Society, including all donations, contributions and bequests, shall be paid into an account operated by the Committee in the name of the Society at such bank as the Committee shall from time to time decide.

7.2.2 At least two officers and one other committee member shall be signatories to the account. All cheques drawn on the account must be signed by at least two signatories.

7.3 The funds belonging to the Society shall be applied only in furtherance of the Aims as approved by the Committee.

7.4 All individual payments in excess of £25 must be approved by the committee.

7.5 The Treasurer may operate a petty cash system for minor expenditure and a cashier may be appointed if required.

7.6.1 Accounting: on behalf of the Committee the Treasurer will keep accounting records of all receipts and payments and prepare annual statements of the account for the AGM and annual report.

7.6.2 The business year will be the calendar year, January to December.

7.6.3 The accounts statement shall be independently examined prior to the AGM and circulated in advance of the meeting.

8 The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society shall be held at a convenient date in March of each year, not less than fourteen days notice being given to members with an appropriate agenda. At this meeting, the business shall be:

8.1 To receive a report upon the activities of the Committee during the past year.

8.2 To receive and approve a set of audited accounts.

8.3 To elect Executive Officers and other members of the Committee for the ensuing year.

8.4 To deal with any other business which the committee considers appropriate to the meeting for which at least seven days notice has been given.

8.5 Nominations for candidates to be elected to the committee, signed by the proposer and two seconders, should be received at least seven days before the AGM. The committee may exercise some discretion over this rule. Proposers and seconders must be paid-up members.

8.6 Notwithstanding the above rules (section 8), the founding committee may at its discretion stay in office and no AGM need be called until the end of the business year in which the Society's first bonfire and torchlight procession have been held.

9 A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society may be called by the committee at any time and may also be called on a requisition signed by not less than twenty members of the Society, stating the object of such a meeting.

9.1 For a Special General Meeting members shall be given a minimum notice of fourteen days and the object of the meeting shall be stated. The business of a Special General Meeting shall be confined to the special matter for which the meeting has been called.

#### 10 QUORUM and TIED VOTING

10.1 The QUORUM at Special or Annual General Meetings of the society shall be ten members, of whom two must be officers, and voting shall be by a show of hands.

10.2 The Chairman of the Society shall preside at all Special or Annual General Meetings or, in his absence, a Vice-Chairperson or a member or other appropriate person elected by the Committee.

10.3 In the event that a quorum is not available at such a meeting, the Committee shall be empowered, if it considers fit, to give notice to paid-up members of a further Special General Meeting at which a quorum shall not be required.

10.3 The Chairperson of any meeting has a personal vote in any voting.

10.3.1 In the event of a tied vote the Chairperson may either call for a second, secret ballot or exercise a casting vote.

10.3.2 If a secret ballot results in a tie, the Chairperson may again exercise a casting vote.

11 CONSTITUTION: changes to this constitution (once adopted) shall be made only at a General Meeting and by a majority of two thirds of those paid-up members present and voting.

11.1 If the Committee considers the amendment sufficiently important, it may require it to be confirmed by reference to the entire membership.

11.2 Only fully-paid-up members will have the right to vote at any meeting

12 DISSOLUTION: If the Committee decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Society, it shall call a meeting of all members stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed. If the proposal is confirmed by a simple majority of those present and voting, the Committee shall have power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the Society. Any assets remaining after the settlement of debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to another charitable organisation with similar aims, or some other charitable purpose, as the members of the society may determine.

13 COMMUNICATION: In order to reduce costs, save work and unless otherwise agreed on a case-by-case basis, communication from the Committee and Members of the Committee to Society Members will normally be by email. Communication from Members to Committee Members can also be by email, but may not be considered to have occurred unless acknowledged.

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THIS CONSTITUTION has not been formally adopted.

Revised issue 5 Jan 2019:

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