



MEXBOROUGH & SWINTON ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Constitution Rules of Membership & Policies

10th Edition – September 2024

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This is the 10th edition of the Constitution and Rules of Membership of Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society, September 2024 and supersedes all previous issues of the Constitution and Rules of Membership.

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Constitution

Adopted this the 15th day of August 1996. Amended 22nd May 1997, 23rd May 2002, 26th February 2004, 24th June 2010, 23rd May 2013 and further amended 12th September 2024.

A. Name

The name of the society is Mexborough and Swinton Astronomical Society (“the Society”).

B. Administration

Subject to the matters set out below the Society and its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with this constitution by the members of the Executive Committee, constituted by clause H of this constitution (“the Executive Committee”).

C. Objects

- 1) The Society’s objects (“the objects”) shall be;
 - i) the advancement of education for the public benefit in astronomy and its associated sciences

D. Powers

In furtherance of the objects but not otherwise the Executive Committee may exercise the following powers and shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law:

- 1) Power to raise funds and to invite and receive contributions provided that in raising funds the Executive Committee shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities;
- 2) Power to buy, take on lease or in exchange any property necessary for the achievement of the objects and to maintain and equip it for use;
- 3) Power subject to any conditions by law to sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the property of the Society;
- 4) Power subject to any consents required by law to borrow money and to charge all or any part of the property of the Society with repayments of the money so borrowed;
- 5) Power to employ staff (who shall not be members of the Executive Committee) as are necessary for the proper pursuit of the objects and to make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payments of pensions and superannuation for staff and their dependants;
- 6) Power to co-operate with other charities, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the objects or of similar charitable purposes and to exchange information and advice with them;
- 7) Power to support any charitable associations or institutions formed for all or any of the objects;
- 8) Power to appoint such advisory groups as the Executive Committee may think fit and define the terms of reference for such groups;
- 9) Power to make, modify and revoke rules pertaining to the use of facilities owned or maintained by the Society and to deem any such condition to be a Rule of Membership of the Society (“rules”);
- 10) Power to do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the objects.

E. Membership

- 1) Membership is open to any person who is interested in furthering the objects:
 - i) all applications for membership of the Society must be made in writing to the Secretary;
 - ii) applications for Junior membership must be countersigned by a legal guardian of the applicant.
- 2) Applications for membership shall be considered by the Executive Committee at their next meeting following the date of application
 - i) An application shall be approved if supported by a simple majority of the members of the Executive Committee present and voting.
 - ii) The Executive Committee must inform the applicant in writing of their decision within 21 days of the decision.
- 3) The Executive Committee may only refuse an application for membership if, acting reasonably and properly, they consider it to be in the best interests of the Society to refuse the application.
 - i) The Executive Committee must inform the applicant in writing of the reasons for the refusal within 21 days of the decision;
 - ii) The Executive Committee must consider any written representations the applicant may make about the decision. The Executive Committee decision following any written representations must be notified to the applicant in writing but shall be final.
- 4) Membership of the Society shall be composed of Ordinary, Junior and Honorary members (“members”).
 - i) An Ordinary member shall be any person aged 18 years or over who has paid a subscription as defined in Clause F of this constitution.

- ii) A Junior member shall be any person aged below 18 years who has paid a subscription as defined in Clause F of this constitution. On reaching the age of 18 years any Junior member shall automatically become an Ordinary member.
- iii) An Honorary member shall be any suitable person elected by the Executive Committee and they shall be granted all the rights of membership but shall not pay any subscription fees.
- 5) Members shall agree to be bound by this Constitution and any rules of membership published by the Executive Committee relating to the use of facilities owned or maintained by the Society.
- 6) All members shall be given a copy of this Constitution and any rules. New members of the Society will receive copies of such documents as soon as is practicable after the date of joining. New copies will be issued in the event of changes made from time to time.
- 7) Members, other than Honorary, shall renew their membership by paying the subscription as defined in clause F.
- 8) The Executive Committee shall have the power to suspend any or all privileges of membership of any individual for good reason, pending a full investigation of the reason for such suspension.
- 9) The Executive Committee shall have the power to terminate the membership of any individual for good reason. The individual concerned shall have the right to appear before the Executive Committee before a final decision is made.
 - i) The individual may appeal against the decision of the Executive Committee by requesting a Special General Meeting within 7 days.
 - ii) The individual may be accompanied at any meeting where termination of their membership is under consideration;
- 10) Any member leaving the Society shall receive no reimbursement.
- 11) Any member in possession of any of the Society's property at the time of leaving the Society will return all items within four weeks of leaving. Failure to do so may result in legal action being taken. The item or items must be returned in a condition similar to the condition in which the item or items were loaned.
- 12) Membership is not transferable to anyone else.
- 13) The membership of a member is terminated if:
 - i) the member dies;
 - ii) the member resigns by written notice to the Society unless, after the resignation, there would be less than two members;
 - iii) any sum due from the member to the society is not paid within one month of it falling due;
 - iv) The member is removed by a resolution of the Executive Committee under clause 8 above.
- 14) The Executive Committee must keep a register of names and addresses of members which must be made available to any member upon request.

F. Subscriptions and Fees

- 1) Members shall pay an annual subscription fee for each year of membership.
- 2) The Society's financial year will begin on the 1st of April and end on the 31st of March the next year.
- 3) Visitors to the Society's premises will be charged an attendance fee for each visit. Any such visitor shall be deemed a none-voting member of the Society for the duration of the visit and shall be bound by this Constitution and rules.
- 4) Subscriptions and fees may be varied by a majority of the members present and voting at a General Meeting of the Society.
- 5) The rates for such subscriptions and fees shall be displayed.
- 6) The Executive Committee may make, modify and revoke rules under clause D sub-clause 9 pertaining to how subscription payments are to be made.

G. Patrons

- 1) The Society may appoint a maximum of 4 patrons
 - i) one Patron shall be styled Honorary President & Patron;
 - ii) other patrons shall be styled Patron.
- 2) Patrons must agree to accept the appointment.
- 3) Patrons shall be granted honorary membership for period of office.
- 4) A Patron may be appointed or removed from office by a resolution passed by simple majority at either
 - i) a quorate Executive Committee meeting;
 - ii) a quorate General meeting of the Society.

H. Executive Committee

- 1) An Executive Committee shall be appointed to manage and be ultimately responsible for the work and the funds of the Society. The members of the Executive Committee will be the trustees of the Society.
- 2) Executive Committee members must be active in carrying out their responsibilities.
- 3) The Executive Committee shall consist of not less than 3 and not more than 13 members elected at an Annual General Meeting to the following positions within the Society:
 - i) Chairperson
 - ii) Secretary
 - iii) Treasurer
 - iv) Other titled positions as deemed necessary to facilitate the management of the Society may be created, revoked and modified to better serve the objects. The titled positions, other than those in clause H, sub-clause 3 items (i), (ii) and (iii) may only be amended by a majority of members present and voting at a General Meeting.
 - v) An appropriate number of untitled Executive Committee members.
- 4) No member may hold more than one position on the Executive Committee.
- 5) Proceedings of the Executive Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any failure to appoint or any disqualification of a member.
- 6) The membership may remove any member of the Executive Committee at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose.
- 7) Where a vacancy occurs in the Executive Committee then either
 - i) The Executive Committee may;
 - a) Leave the position vacant until the next Annual General Meeting provided that the responsibilities of the vacant position are covered by the Executive Committee, or
 - b) Co-opt a member in accordance with sub-clause (8) of this clause, or
 - c) Open nominations to elect a replacement at a Special General Meeting.
 - ii) The membership may request a Special General Meeting to hold elections to fill any vacancy.
- 8) The Executive Committee may appoint co-opted members provided that the size of the Executive Committee is not more 13. No one may be appointed as a co-opted member if, as a result, more than one third of the Executive Committee or more than 4 members of the Executive Committee (whichever is least) would be co-opted members at any one time. The appointment of one or more co-opted members shall be made at a meeting of the Executive Committee called under clause K.
- 9) Where a vacancy in the Executive Committee is filled, by any means, the member appointed to the vacant position shall take office from either:
 - i) The conclusion of the meeting at which they were appointed if the post is already vacated, or
 - ii) When the post becomes vacant.
- 10) All members of the Executive Committee shall retire from office at the end of the next Annual General Meeting. They may be re-elected or re-appointed.

I. Eligibility of membership of the Executive Committee

- 1) No member shall hold office if he or she:
 - i) Fails to sign in the minute book of the Executive Committee a declaration of acceptance and willingness to act in the trusts of the Society. Such declarations must be made by each member after election to the Executive Committee for the duration of the term of office.
 - ii) Is aged under 18 years.
- 2) A member of the Executive Committee shall cease to hold office if he or she:
 - i) Is disqualified from acting as a member of the Executive Committee by virtue of Section 72 of the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision).
 - ii) Becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs.
 - iii) Is absent without the permission of the Executive Committee from all their meetings held within a period of six months and the Executive Committee resolve that his or her office be vacated.
 - iv) Gives written notice to the Executive Committee of their wish to resign.

J. Executive Committee members not to be personally interested

- 1) (Subject to the provision of sub-clause (2) of this clause) No member of the Executive Committee shall acquire any interest in property belonging to the Society (otherwise than as a trustee of the Society) or receive remuneration or be interested (otherwise than as a member of the Executive Committee) in any contract entered into by the Executive Committee.

- 2) Any member of the Executive Committee for any time being who is a solicitor, accountant or other person engaged in a profession may charge and be paid all the usual professional charges for business done by him or her or his or her firm when instructed by the other members of the Executive Committee to act in a professional capacity on behalf of the Society; (Provided that at no time the majority of the members of the Executive Committee benefit under this provision and that a member of the Executive Committee shall withdraw from any meeting at which his or her own instruction or remuneration, or that of his or her firm, is under discussion).

K. Meetings and proceedings of the Executive Committee

- 1) The Executive Committee shall hold at least six meetings each year, at least 14 days' notice shall be served on all members of the Executive Committee prior to a meeting taking place.
- 2) When in attendance at a meeting of the Executive Committee the Chairperson shall act as Chair. Otherwise:
 - i) The members present may elect from amongst themselves someone to act as Chair.
- 3) There shall be a quorum when at least one third of the number of members of the Executive Committee for the time being or three members of the Executive Committee, whichever is the greater, are present at a meeting.
- 4) The Executive Committee shall keep minutes, in books kept for the purpose, of the proceedings at meetings of the Executive Committee and any sub-committee. The minutes will be available for inspection, upon request, by any member of the Society.
- 5) An archive will be kept and maintained of all Society documents for as long as is necessary.
- 6) The Executive Committee may from time to time make and alter rules for the conduct of their business, the summoning and conduct of their meetings and the custody of documents. No rule may be made which is inconsistent with this constitution.
- 7) A meeting of the Executive Committee may be held by suitable electronic means agreed by the Executive Committee in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants.
 - i) Any member of the Executive Committee participating at a meeting by suitable electronic means agreed by the trustees in which a participant or participants may communicate with all the other participants shall qualify as being present at the meeting.
 - ii) Meetings held by electronic means must comply with rules for meetings, including chairing and the taking of minutes.

L. Receipts and expenditure

- 1) The funds of the Society, including all donations, contributions and bequests, shall be paid into an account or accounts operated by the Executive Committee in the name of the Society at such bank or building society as the Executive Committee shall from time to time decide. A portion of the funds, to a limit set by the Executive Committee, may be held in cash by the Treasurer.
- 2) All cheques drawn on the account or accounts must be signed by at least two members of the Executive Committee. Blank cheques must never be signed by Executive Committee members.
- 3) The funds belonging to the Society shall be applied only in furthering the objects. The Executive Committee must make an effort to utilise any income in the furtherance of the objects. Any income remaining after allowing for operational costs must be invested so as to earn interest.
- 4) All expenditure shall be approved by the Executive Committee.

M. Property

- 1) Subject to sub-clause (2) of this clause, the Executive Committee shall cause the title to:
 - i) All land held by or in trust for the Society which is not vested in the Official Custodian for Charities; and
 - ii) All investments held by or on behalf of the Society: to be vested either in a corporation entitled to act as a custodian trustee or in not less than three individuals appointed by them as holding trustees. Holding trustees may be removed by the Executive Committee at their pleasure and shall act in accordance with the lawful directions of the Executive Committee, the holding trustees shall not be liable for the acts and defaults of its members.
- 2) If a corporation entitled to act as a custodian trustee has not been appointed to hold the property of the Society, the Executive Committee may permit any investments held by or in trust for the Society to be held in the name of a clearing bank, trust corporation or any stockbroking company which is a member of the International Stock Exchange (or any

subsidiary of any such stockbroking company) as nominee for the Executive Committee; and may pay such a nominee reasonable and proper remuneration for acting as such.

- 3) All property must be insured to its full value. The Executive Committee must ensure that this is the case, failure to do so may render Executive Committee members personally liable for any costs incurred.

N. Accounts

The Executive Committee shall comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) with regard to:

- 1) The keeping of accounting records for the Society;
- 2) The preparation of annual statements of account for the Society;
- 3) The auditing or independent examination of the statements of account of the Society; and
- 4) The transmission of the statements of account of the Society to the Commissioners.

O. Annual Report

- 1) The Executive Committee shall comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) with regard to the preparation of an annual report and its transmission to the Commissioners.

P. Annual Return

- 1) The Executive Committee shall comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) with regard to the preparation of an annual return and its transmission to the Commissioners.

Q. General Meetings

A General Meeting is a meeting open to all members of the Society and at which the powers of the Executive Committee are exercised by the membership.

- 1) At least one General Meeting must be called each year, known as the Annual General Meeting. The Annual General Meeting shall:
 - i) be held in the month of May in each year or as soon as practicable thereafter.
 - ii) be called by the Executive Committee.
 - iii) include the presentation of the annual report and annual accounts of the Society for the preceding year.
 - iv) include the election of an Executive Committee, nominations being opened prior to the Annual General Meeting in accordance with clause R of this Constitution.
- 2) Any other General Meeting shall be known as a Special General Meeting;
 - i) A Special General Meeting may be called by either:
 - a) the Executive Committee, or
 - b) at least three members of the Society may request such a meeting in writing to the Executive Committee. The request must state the business to be considered.
 - ii) When a Special General Meeting is to elect one or more members to the Executive Committee nominations will be opened prior to the meeting in accordance with clause R of this Constitution.
- 3) For any Annual or Special General Meeting the procedures shall be:
 - i) 28 days' notice must be given to all members by the Secretary. The notice must state the business to be discussed.
 - ii) The Secretary, or other person appointed in their absence, must keep a full record of proceedings.
 - iii) A quorum will exist when at least one tenth of the membership or three members of the Society, whichever is the greater, are present.
 - iv) Any voting required shall be in accordance with clause S of this Constitution.
 - v) When in attendance at a General Meeting the Chairperson shall be entitled to act as Chair. Otherwise:
 - a) The members present may elect from amongst themselves someone to act as Chair.

R. Nominations

- 1) Nominations for election to the Executive Committee must be made by members of the Society in writing and must be in the hands of the Secretary at least 21 clear days before the General Meeting. Should nominations exceed vacancies, election shall be by secret ballot. All nominations must:
 - i) Be proposed and seconded. The nominee may perform either of these roles.
 - ii) Be signed by the nominee to indicate acceptance of the nomination and a willingness to undertake the office and abide by this Constitution.
- 2) Nominations shall be open for a period of 21 days prior to the General Meeting.
- 3) No member may accept nomination for more than one titled Executive Committee position.

- 4) Any member nominated for a titled Executive Committee position may also be nominated for an untitled position. In the event of them being elected to a titled position then any other nomination will be automatically withdrawn.

S. Voting Procedure

The procedure for voting at meetings of the Executive Committee or any General Meeting shall be as follows:

- 1) No voting shall take place at any meeting where a quorum is not present;
- 2) All proposals which have not been seconded must not be voted upon;
- 3) All proposals which have been seconded must be voted upon;
- 4) Every member aged 18 years or over shall have one vote on each proposal, except the President who shall vote only when acting as Chair of the meeting;
- 5) Voting will be by a show of hands unless otherwise proposed or specified within this Constitution;
- 6) All decisions require a simple majority agreement of the members present and voting, unless specified to contrary within this Constitution;
- 7) The Chair of the meeting shall not vote except in the case of equality of votes when they shall have a casting vote on each proposal.

T. Notices

- 1) Any notice required to be served on any member of the Society shall be in writing and shall be served by the Secretary or the Executive Committee on any member either personally or:
 - i) by post in a pre-paid letter addressed to such member at his or her last known address in the United Kingdom, and any letter so sent shall be deemed to have been received within 10 days of posting. Or
 - ii) (Subject to the provision of sub-clause (2) of this clause) by electronic mail message addressed to such member at his or her last known electronic mail address, and any electronic mail message so sent shall be deemed to have been received on the day of sending. Or
 - iii) (Subject to the provision of sub-clause (2) of this clause) by facsimile to such member at his or her last known facsimile number, and any facsimile so sent shall be deemed to have been received on the day of sending.
- 2) Notices can only be sent by facsimile or electronic mail if a fax number or e-mail address has been supplied by the member, provided the recipient has indicated a willingness to receive notices by one or other of these methods.

U. Alterations to the Constitution

- 1) Subject to the following provisions of this clause the constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting at a General Meeting. Voting on any alterations to this Constitution shall be by secret ballot.
- 2) The notice of the General Meeting must include notice of the resolution setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.
- 3) No amendment may be made to clause A, clause C, clause J, clause V or this clause without prior consent in writing of the Commissioners.
- 4) No amendment may be made which would have the effect of making the Society cease to be a charity at law.
- 5) The Executive Committee should promptly send the Commissioners a copy of any amendment made under this clause.

V. Dissolution

- 1) If the Executive Committee decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Society it shall call a Special General Meeting of the Society. If the proposal is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting the Executive Committee shall have power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the Society.
- 2) Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Society as the members of the Society may determine or failing that shall be applied for some other charitable purpose.
- 3) A copy of the statement of accounts, or account and statement, for the final accounting period of the Society must be sent to the Commissioners.

This constitution was adopted on the date mentioned above by the persons whose signatures appear on the bottom of this document.

Rules of Membership

1. All members must behave in an orderly manner.
2. Members are personally liable for any damage caused to Society property through failure to adhere to the rules. Legal action may be taken if necessary.
3. All keys to Society property are and remain the property of the Society.
4. Members may be asked to sign for documents where the Executive Committee deems it necessary.
5. The Society operates a strict no smoking policy.
6. Members must comply with the rules and requirements of any venue hired or leased for holding Society meetings and events. The Executive Committee will inform members of such rules and requirements.
7. The Society's financial year is split into four quarters defined as:
 - a) Quarter 1 - April 1st to June 30th
 - b) Quarter 2 - July 1st to September 30th
 - c) Quarter 3 - October 1st to December 31st
 - d) Quarter 4 – January 1st to March 31st
8. The annual subscription shall be defined as:
 - a) a single payment covering the membership for one year; Or
 - b) four quarterly payments whose sum shall be equal to the single payment defined above.
9. Payment can be made
 - a) by cash or cheque for members choosing single annual payment
 - b) by automated scheduled means such as a standing order for members choosing quarterly payment
 - c) cheque or cash payments are only available to members choosing the single payment option.
10. Subscriptions shall become due:
 - a) on April 1st for a renewal by single payment (defined in 10(a) above) and must be paid not later than April 30th.
 - b) on the first day of each quarter for a renewal by automated quarterly payment (defined in 10(b) above) and must be paid not later than April 30th, July 31st, October 31st, and January 31st for each quarter respectively.
 - c) for new members immediately following acceptance of their application; payment must be made within 28 days.
11. Subscriptions for new members shall be calculated as the sum of quarterly payments for the remainder of the financial year including the quarter in which the application was accepted.
12. Members paying quarterly subscriptions shall pay the quarterly subscription rate in effect on the first day of the quarter.
13. All members renewing their subscription must complete and return their Subscription Renewal Notice no later than April 30th each year. Payments will not be accepted without a completed Subscription Renewal Notice
14. Children under the age of 13 years must be accompanied by their parent or guardian.
15. Children between 13 and 18 years of age must have the consent of their parent or guardian to attend meetings or events unaccompanied. The committee may request that consent be given in writing.
16. On reaching the age of 18 a junior member is required to pay the appropriate Ordinary member subscription from the next quarterly renewal date when subscriptions fall due.
17. In cases of genuine hardship a member may ask the Executive Committee to exercise its discretion and vary or defer subscription payments.
18. Members must inform the Secretary, in writing, of any change of address.
19. A quorum must be maintained in order for any business to be transacted at a meeting of the Executive Committee or at any General Meeting.
20. Members must act in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy and obey any rules or follow any guidance published by the Executive Committee relating to Health & Safety.
21. In the interests of hygiene and the comfort of all members we regret that pets are not permitted in the Society's premises.
22. No member may use the name of the Society or give the impression that any event or activity is sponsored, supported or arranged by or for the benefit of the Society without the written permission of the Executive Committee.
23. No fundraising may be undertaken on behalf of the Society without the written permission of the Executive Committee being obtained prior to the activity taking place and any sponsorship or donations solicited.

24. Members wishing to submit proposals or amendments for consideration at a General Meeting must do so in writing to the Secretary at least 21 clear days prior to the date of the meeting. The proposal or amendment must be seconded.

25. In addition to these rules members are bound by the:

Rules for Use of IT Facilities

Rules for Use of the Observatory

Rules for the Issue of Keys

Rules for Use of the Library

These rules have been approved and adopted by the Executive Committee in accordance with clause D, sub-clause (9) of the Constitution and supersede all previous rules of membership.

Rules for the Use of the Library

- 1) The Librarian must record all items leaving the Library. If the Librarian is not present another member of the Executive Committee will deputise.
- 2) No member may borrow more than 3 items at any one time unless previously agreed with the Librarian.
- 3) The loan period is
 - a) 6 months for items of observing equipment. Or
 - b) 4 weeks for any other item.
- 4) The loan period may be extended provided that
 - a) No other member has requested the item
 - b) The extension is requested not more than 2 weeks before the loan expires for observing equipment or 1 week before the loan expires for any other item.
 - c) The item is available for inspection at the time the extension is requested.
- 5) All items must be returned by the specified date.
- 6) Members must return items before the end of the loan period at the request of the Executive Committee.
- 7) Receipts for the return of an item will only be issued at the borrower's specific request.
- 8) If items are not returned by the specified date a reminder will be issued. The member must meet any costs incurred in issuing a reminder.
- 9) If items are not returned one week after a reminder has been issued a final reminder will be issued. The member may be asked to appear before the Executive Committee at its next meeting. The member must meet any costs incurred in issuing a final reminder.
- 10) Failure to return items will result in the member's use of library facilities being withdrawn until the member returns any items.
- 11) Any member failing to return items will be required to pay the full costs of replacement.
- 12) Members may be held personally liable for any damage to or loss of library items in their possession.
- 13) Items of equipment may be accompanied by either manufacturers, suppliers and/or Society produced instructions which members must familiarise themselves with prior to borrowing and use such equipment.
- 14) Any software or media available in the library must:
 - a) Not be copied or duplicated.
 - b) In the case of software, be removed from the member's computer at the end of the loan period unless the software license allows for unrestricted copying (e.g. the software is freeware)
- 15) Members must ensure all Library items are returned in the event of them leaving the Society (in accordance with Clause E, sub-clause (11) of the Constitution). Failure to do so may result in legal action being taken.

These rules have been approved and adopted by the Executive Committee in accordance with clause D, sub-clause (9) of the Constitution and deemed to form part of the Rules of Membership of the Society

Rules for Use of IT Facilities

In the event of any difficulty users of Society Information Technology facilities must contact the Information Technology Officer ("IT Officer"). If the IT Officer cannot be contacted you must contact another member of the Executive Committee.

Information Technology facilities include computers, software, audio-visual equipment, internet access, telephony and messaging services, the society website, and any 3rd party website access provided as a benefit of membership.

- 1) The Society computers must only be used to run software that the Society provides. Software may only be installed by the IT Officer once they have been satisfied that it is:
 - a) Functioning correctly
 - b) Suitable for the purpose intended
 - c) Properly licensed
 - d) Free of virus infection
 - e) Will not conflict with existing software
- 2) No bootable media are to be used without the written permission of the IT Officer.
- 3) Members must not disclose any user account or password details for facilities which the society provides. Members will be held responsible for any acts performed using their user accounts or passwords. If a member believes that someone has unauthorised access to any system they **must** inform the IT Officer immediately.
- 4) Where personal areas are provided for the use of individual members the Executive Committee reserves the right to inspect their contents for the purposes of detecting virus infection or unlicensed software. The IT Officer may delete any files, without warning, should they be found to be unlicensed or virus infected. If this is necessary the member will be notified that the file has been deleted.
- 5) Personal areas must not be used to store any material of an offensive or pornographic nature. Such file areas are to be used only for astronomical purposes. The IT Officer will delete any pornographic or offensive files.
- 6) Members must accept legal responsibility for the contents of any personal areas and indemnify the Society against any legal action resulting from the misuse of any personal area.
- 7) IT facilities provided by the Society are to be used primarily for purposes of an astronomical nature; reasonable personal use is permitted.
- 8) Equipment must not be removed without the written permission of the IT Officer.
- 9) The Executive Committee may introduce Terms and Conditions or Usage Policies for specific services that members must agree to if they wish to use the service.
- 10) Items of IT equipment, services or software may be accompanied by either manufacturers, suppliers and/or Society produced instructions which members must familiarise themselves with prior to use of such equipment.

These rules have been approved and adopted by the Executive Committee in accordance with clause D, sub-clause (9) of the Constitution and are deemed to form part of the Rules of Membership.

Rules for the Issue of Keys

1. Keys are only available to adult members of the Society. Keys cannot be issued to junior members.
2. Members must apply for keys in writing to the Secretary.
3. Applicants for keys must complete any familiarisation or training for premises or equipment which the Executive Committee deems necessary before an application for keys will be considered.
4. Key holders must complete any updated familiarisation or training deemed necessary by the Executive Committee from time to time; key holders will be required to return keys temporarily until this is completed.
5. The Executive Committee will consider applications with regard to the following criteria:
 - a) Health and safety
 - b) Competence of the applicant to use the equipment or premises
 - c) Trustworthiness
6. The Curator of Instruments and Observatory is responsible issuing and collecting keys.
7. The Curator of Instruments and Observatory will maintain a list of key holders.
8. Any keys issued are the responsibility of the key holder and must only be used by the key holder.
9. A charge to cover the cost of key cutting will be made for the issue of keys.
10. The Treasurer is responsible for all monies regarding the issue of keys.
11. All keys issued by Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society for its property, equipment and premises remain the property of the Society. The Executive Committee has the power to demand the return of any keys issued at any time.
12. Members must return any keys to the Society in the event of them failing to renew their subscription.
13. When requested, members must return any keys within the period specified by the Executive Committee.
14. Any member of the Executive Committee may, with good reason, request the return of any keys issued. A receipt will be issued for any keys so returned if requested.
15. Members may appeal to the Executive Committee against the decision to have their keys withdrawn
16. Keys must not be copied.
17. Keys must not be marked or identified in any way.

These rules have been approved and adopted by the Executive Committee in accordance with clause D, sub-clause (9) of the Constitution and are deemed to form part of the Rules of Membership.

Rules for the Use of the Observatory

In the event of any difficulty users of the Observatory must contact the Curator of Instruments and Observatory (“the Curator”). If for any reason the Curator cannot be contacted you must contact one of the other Executive Committee members listed on site. All difficulties must be entered in the Observatory logbook along with the name of Executive Committee member contacted.

For clarification the rules have been separated into several areas.

A copy of the Rules for the Use of the Observatory and any site or equipment instructions will be on available at the Observatory.

General Rules

1. The Observatory telephone number must not be given out to members of the public.
2. The Observatory telephone must not to be used for non-society business.
3. All users of the Observatory are required to record their arrival and departure times along with any comments in the Observatory logbook.
4. On arrival check the logbook and notice boards for any reports of damage to or failure of equipment.
5. Members visiting the Observatory must ensure that the Observatory is left clean and tidy.
6. Smoking in the Observatory is not permitted.
7. No food or drinks are allowed upstairs in the observatory.
8. Lights and other electrical equipment must be turned off before leaving the site; some equipment may need to be left powered up, this will be indicated on the equipment or an entry will be made in the logbook.
9. Care must be taken when using electrical equipment; if you have any doubts about any electrical equipment do not use it and write your doubts in the Observatory logbook.
10. If a fuse blows note the incident in the Observatory logbook; if you are competent to rectify the fault and replace the fuse you may do so using a correctly rated fuse.
11. All members must ensure that the Observatory alarm is armed when they leave the building. If this is not the case the member must contact the Curator (or other Executive Committee member if the Curator is unavailable) as soon as possible.
12. Keys for the Observatory must not be identified as such.

General Site Rules

1. Due care and diligence must be taken by all members when conducting themselves, other members and guests around the Observatory site.
2. Members may bring family and friends to the Observatory as guests provided that:
 - a. No personal profit or income is derived from the activity.
 - b. They have checked for planned public events or maintenance work being carried out.
3. After unlocking the main gates fasten the lock back onto the left hand gate. The gates must be securely fastened back to allow access to the Observatory site. Once on the Observatory site the gates should be pulled together to make the site more secure.
4. If any part of the site has been damaged make the damage safe if you can and record the damage in the Observatory logbook. If the damage is serious contact the Curator.
5. Any members bringing visitors to the site will assume full responsibility for their visitors.
6. All members and visitors are must to take any rubbish home with them.
7. All crockery and utensils are to be emptied, washed and stored before leaving.
8. You must drive off the Observatory site in a forward gear.
9. Headlights must be dipped whilst on the Observatory site. Would members approaching the Observatory site in a vehicle please dip the headlights of the vehicle prior to entering the Observatory site.

Observatory Rules

1. The Observatory building is protected by a security alarm. When you are entering the Observatory building after unlocking the door you have 30 seconds to disarm the alarm. This is done by entering the code into the alarm unit. Once this is done the unit will display the symbol ‘u’.
2. All members **must** lock the Observatory door when they are inside the building and, for safety and to allow other members access to the building, remove the key from the lock.
3. If you require entry to the dome you must unlock the padlock at the top of the stairs. Once this is done you must re-padlock the hasp back to the door, otherwise the hasp may fall down and trap under the staple and thus you will not be able to lift the trapdoor up. The key for the padlock has to be either placed on the base of the telescope or back in the cupboard.

4. No equipment is to be stored on the stepladders.
5. The dome has a park position; it has to be returned to this position when the viewing session is over prior to the shutter being closed. The park position is indicated by markings on the dome and wall.
6. When you have finished in the dome:
 - Return any equipment to its designated storage place;
 - Close and secure the shutters;
 - Turn out the lights;
 - Close the hatch as you go down the stairs and secure with the padlock provided.
7. When leaving the Observatory building at night, pressing the white button at the side of the alarm unit will illuminate the front door. The light will automatically switch off after 5 minutes. The button has a small red light above it to help you find it in the dark.
8. The procedure for leaving the Observatory is to enter the code into the alarm unit, you now have 30 seconds to leave the building and lock the front door. You must close all doors behind you and turn off all lights as you leave.

The Telescopes and Equipment

1. Due care and attention must be exercised when operating the telescopes and attendant equipment. It is the responsibility of the member to seek guidance on how to use the telescope and attendant equipment.
2. Any difficulties with the operation of the telescopes and equipment must be logged in the Observatory logbook. If the difficulties arise from or result in damage to the telescope the Curator must be contacted as soon as possible.
3. Solar filters **must** be inspected for any damage before they are used. If there is **any** doubt about the state or suitability of a filter **do not** undertake any solar work and record the matter in the Observatory logbook.
4. The Telescopes are to be parked in a North-South orientation and in a horizontal attitude.
5. All portable equipment (e.g. eyepieces, cameras etc.) must be returned to its correct place of storage.
6. Items of equipment may be accompanied by either manufacturers, suppliers and/or Society produced instructions which members must familiarise themselves with prior to use such equipment.



WARNING

Under no circumstances must any telescope, binoculars, camera or similar optical equipment be pointed at the sun or used for solar work without the correct procedures being undertaken.

These rules have been approved and adopted by the Executive Committee in accordance with clause D, sub-clause (9) of the Constitution and are deemed to form part of the Rules of Membership of the Society.

Health and Safety Policy

Policy Statement

It is Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society's policy, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- i. To provide and maintain premises and equipment that are safe and without risks to health;
- ii. To make arrangements for ensuring safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of equipment;
- iii. To provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety of members and visitors.
- iv. To provide such protective equipment as is necessary for the health and safety of members and visitors;
- v. To monitor the effectiveness of health and safety provisions within the Society;
- vi. To keep the Health and Safety Policy under regular review and to duly publish any amendments.

Responsibility

Responsibility for Health and Safety is shared between the Secretary and Curator of Instruments and Observatory in the first instance. These officers have a duty to report to the Executive Committee on matters of health and safety and maintain records of Health & Safety audits and any incidents of injury, ill health or 'near misses'.

It is equally a duty for everyone engaged in Society activities to exercise responsibility and care in the prevention of injury and ill health to themselves and to others who may be affected by their acts and omissions.

No person shall intentionally interfere with, or misuse anything provided by the Society in the interests of health, safety or welfare.

Members of the Society **must**:

- Report any incident of accident or injury to the Secretary, Curator or the Executive Committee.
- Report any concerns relating to the safety of equipment or premises to the Secretary, Curator or the Executive Committee.
- Not attempt to service or repair equipment unless they are qualified to do so.
- Not permit access to premises or use of equipment by the public if they have *any* doubts regarding its safety.
- Seek advice if they have any doubts as to how to operate equipment safely.
- Not smoke on Society premises

The Executive Committee **must**:

- Not permit access to premises or use of equipment by the public if they have *any* doubts regarding its safety.
- Publish guidelines, rules and advice relating to the safe use of equipment and premises and draw member's attention to such guidelines, rules and advice.
- Conduct a Health and Safety Risk Assessment of all premises at least once per year.
- Conduct a Health and Safety Risk Assessment of any site to be visited as part of an Outreach event.

Data Protection Policy

As a registered charity Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society is duty bound to collect and maintain personal data in order to administer the affairs of the Society. The Society will operate in accordance with the provisions of The Data Protection Act 1998 ("the Act") and uphold The Data Protection Principles set out in Schedule 1 of the Act. The Act implements European Council Directive 95/46/EC and supersedes the Data Protection Act 1984 ("the 1984 Act"). The Act covers all personal data, whether stored on computer or paper.

What this means to you

- We have to tell you what personal data we collect.
- We have to tell you why we collect those data.
- We have to ensure we do not keep personal data for any longer than is necessary.
- We have to maintain the data to ensure they are accurate and fit for purpose.
- We have to ensure that data are accessible only by authorised persons.
- We have to tell you to whom we will disclose your personal data and why.
- You have a right to inspect the data that we hold about you.
- You can object to the Society processing your personal data.

What Personal Data does the Society collect?

If you are a member of the Society, we will collect your name, postal address and telephone number and your date of birth. We will also collect mobile telephone numbers and email addresses in order to provide some services.

If you make payments under the HM Revenue and Custom's Gift Aid scheme we may require additional information as prescribed by them in order to administer our claims.

As a result of your membership of the Society other personal data will be generated, including records of payments made by you to the Society, records of items borrowed from the Society and records of any keys for Society premises issued to you.

If you visit the Society we will collect your name, address, contact telephone number and in some cases your e-mail address.

When we collect personal data we will draw you attention to the fact by use of the 'information padlock' (right) symbol on the form, document or web page. The Information Commissioner and the National Consumer Council devised the symbol in order to alert individuals, at a glance, that personal data are being collected for processing.



Why does the Society collect these data?

We have to collect a minimum amount of information to maintain membership records and to enable us to send notices (for example of the Annual General Meeting) to members, as we are legally bound to do.

We require information prescribed by the HM Revenue and Custom in order to administer Gift Aid.

We may use additional information (if you are prepared to supply it) to provide you with other facilities and information to you to maximise your membership benefits.

We have to maintain a record of payments made by you for our accounts (and for making claims under Gift Aid). We also have a legal duty to protect our property and assets.

If you visit the Society we will need to record information to administer your visit: for instance, we may need to contact you if for any reason your visit cannot go ahead. We may also use such data to derive statistics.

The Society will not use your personal data for the purposes of direct marketing or for any automated decision-making.

How long will the Society keep Personal data?

In most cases your personal data will relate to our account records and thus will be retained as a minimum until the later of:

- six years after the end of the accounting period they relate to
- 12 months after a Gift Aid repayment claim is made for that accounting period

How will the Society ensure my personal data are accurate?

The Society and the individual both have responsibilities for ensuring that personal data are accurate and fit for purpose.

The Society will issue a subscription renewal notice each year which members must return if they wish to renew their subscriptions. If your personal data change (for example you move house) you must inform the Secretary **in writing** of the change.

How will the Society ensure that my personal data are secure?

The Society will take all reasonable steps to ensure that both paper and electronic copies of your personal data are accessible only to those authorised to have access, this will include members of the Executive Committee and, with your consent, other members of the Society.

Will the Society disclose my personal data to anyone else?

The Society will only disclose your personal data to:

- other members of the Society - but only if we have your permission to do so.
- a named member of the Society who is acting on behalf of and with authority of the Executive Committee (for example a member organising an event). Such a member must return all copies of any personal data on completion of the task for which access was granted
- HM Revenue and Customs - if you have agreed to make a donation under Gift Aid.
- The Charity Commission for England and Wales who require some personal data for any member acting as a member of the Executive Committee.
- any accountant or auditor appointed by the Executive Committee to audit the accounts as we may be required to do by law. In this case, personal data shall be limited to records of payments made by you to the Society or vice versa and any Gift Aid declarations.
- any solicitor acting under instruction of the Executive Committee pursuant to attempts by the Society to recover any Society property in your possession or to secure payment of any proper debt incurred by you to the Society.
- the Charity Commissioners if they have a lawful right to request such a disclosure.

Disclosures will also be made

- where we are obliged to do so by law or direction of the Courts.
- if we (or the Police) have reason to believe that disclosure may prevent the commissioning of a criminal offence.

How can I see the personal data the Society holds about me?

You should write to the Secretary asking for a copy of the personal data the Society holds about you. You should state clearly which data you wish to see. We may charge for this service. We must respond within 40 days.

Can I object to my personal data being processed?

Yes, you can object to personal data being processed if you believe that such processing would, under the terms of the Act, cause substantial damage or distress to you or another individual. In practical terms, the data held by the Society are the minimum for workable administration.

If you object you should do so, in writing, to the Secretary stating what damage or distress would be caused and to whom. We have 21 days to respond, either to comply with your request or to state why we consider the request to be unreasonable or unjustified.

Applying for Membership

If you are considering applying for membership of Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society please check the points below and ensure that your application form is completed in full. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Before Applying

- We request that you attend at least four meetings as a visitor before submitting your application.
- You must read the attached Constitution and Rules; by applying for membership you agree to be bound by these.
- Juniors (under 18) applying for membership must have their application form signed by their parent or guardian.
- Please ensure you provide *all* details requested on the application form – including surname, **forenames in full**, and address with postcode – this information is essential to the administration of the Society and to enable us to comply with HM Revenue & Customs regulation for Gift Aid.
- In addition to your name in full you may specify a preferred name by which you wish to be known.
- If you are a taxpayer have you considered paying your subscriptions under Gift Aid?

When You Apply

- Your completed application should be handed to the Secretary.
- The Executive Committee will consider your application at their next meeting following your application; dates of Committee meetings are published in our Programme.
- You will be informed of the outcome of your application in writing and in person if you attend a Society meeting.
- The Executive Committee reserves the right to request proof of eligibility for those applying for concession rate subscription.

Subscriptions and Fees

- Once you submit an application form you will not have to pay visitors fees until your application is processed.
- Successful applicants must pay their subscriptions within 28 days of acceptance.
- The Society cannot accept subscription payments until such a time as the application has been accepted, however if you wish the Treasurer will hold payments on trust until the application is considered. Receipts will only be issued if requested.
- No membership benefits will be available until payment of subscriptions has been reported to the Executive Committee. If a payment is held on trust membership benefits will commence from the date of acceptance.

Gift Aid

giftaid it

Use Gift Aid and you can make your subscription or donation worth more. For every pound you give to us, we get an extra 25 pence from the Inland Revenue. So just tick the box on your application form. It's that simple.

Gift Aid is a way for the Society to increase the value of monetary gifts from UK taxpayers by claiming back the basic rate tax paid by the donor. It can increase the value of donations by a quarter at no extra cost to the donor. HM Revenue & Customs has also allowed that subscription fees can qualify for Gift Aid in some circumstances.

To qualify for Gift Aid you must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs that you donate to will reclaim on your gifts for that tax year. Other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. From 6 April 2008 charities can claim 25 pence for every pound you give.

Should you have any questions concerning the application procedure or membership in general any member of the Executive Committee will be pleased to assist you.



MEXBOROUGH & SWINTON ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Membership Application Form

Surname _____

Forenames (in full) _____

Preferred Name (optional) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Home Phone _____

Mobile Phone (optional) _____

Email address _____

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Can we make your details available to other members of the Society? Yes No

Membership type Ordinary – Full rate Payment Annual
 Ordinary – concession rate Quarterly
 Junior

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Use Gift Aid and you can make your membership fees worth more. For every pound you give to us, we get an extra 25 pence from the Inland Revenue. So just tick the box below. It's that simple.

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money and qualifying subscription payments made on or after the date of this application

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the Society will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

Applicants who have not attained the age of 18 at the date of application must show this form to their parent/guardian and have them sign it to show they approve of the application and to agree to collect the member after meetings. Children under 13 must be accompanied by their parent/guardian at all events.

I wish to apply/approve of this application for membership of Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society and I agree to abide by the Constitution and Rules.

Signature _____ Date _____ (dd/mm/yyyy)

If you are approving this application on behalf of an applicant under the age of 18 years please print your name here _____



Data Protection Act 1998

Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society may hold the details provided on this application in either paper or electronic filing systems. See our Data Protection Policy for further details.

Registered Charity in England and Wales, No. 1064103

Secretary: Shaun O'Dell, 147 Queen Street, Swinton, South Yorkshire, S64 8NG

msas.org.uk