

Bedfordshire Natural History Society

Rules as approved February 1993 and modified October 2022 and March 2025

RULE 1. TITLE

The Society shall be called the Bedfordshire Natural History Society.

RULE 2. OBJECTS

- (a) The Society shall promote the study of all branches of natural history especially in relation to the county of Bedfordshire.
- (b) The Society shall maintain and publish records of the occurrence and distribution of the flora and fauna of the county.
- (c) The Society shall do all that it can to protect the flora and fauna of the county and shall collaborate with other bodies in the conservation of areas of particular natural history interest.

RULE 3. SECTIONS

A Section, to cater for a specific area of study, may be established if approved by the Society's Council. Any such section shall operate according to a set of rules (which must at all times be approved by the Society's Council) and according to the objects of the Society. Should the need arise, the Society's rules shall always take precedence over those of any Section.

RULE 4. PUBLICATIONS

The Society shall produce regular information for members, for example through newsletters or the Society's website, and shall publish an annual Journal. Additional publications may be produced by the Society or by any Section.

RULE 5. MANAGEMENT

- (a) The Society shall be managed by a Council composed of Officers and up to ten other members. The Officers shall consist of a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and not more than five others currently deemed necessary by Council. All elected Council members shall be Trustees of the Society. The Council may co-opt additional members who will not be Trustees and not have voting rights at a Council meeting. Six elected members shall form a quorum at a Council meeting; in the absence of the Chair, the chair shall be taken by another member of the Council elected by those present and voting.
- (b) The Council shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. The Council shall nominate Officers and voting members may submit additional nominations. Any candidate for election as an Officer or member of the Council shall be nominated by not less than five voting members or two voting members of the Society respectively. These nominations can be submitted in hard copy or electronically and shall be received by the Secretary at least fourteen days before the Annual General Meeting.

- (c) All decisions of the Council shall be taken by a simple majority of those present and voting.
- (d) At least ten days' written notice shall be given by the Secretary of meetings of the Council.
- (e) The Council may set up any sub-committee with terms of reference and membership as it may approve, provided that any such sub-committee is constituted in support of the aims and objectives of the Society.

RULE 6. MEMBERSHIP

- (a) Membership is open to all, subject to payment of the appropriate subscription and to the provisions of paragraph 6(d). Members admitted during the last three months of any year shall remain members until the 31st December of the following year without further payment.
- (b) The Society shall consist of: (a) Ordinary members. (b) Ordinary Household (two or more members who reside at the same address). (c) Student members (18 or over in full-time education). (d) Student members (under 18). (e) Corporate members. Paid up Ordinary members, Ordinary Household and Corporate members, but not Student members, shall be entitled to one copy of the Journal published during the year of their membership. Paid up Ordinary and Corporate members, but not Student members, shall be entitled to one vote at a General Meeting of the Society; Ordinary Household memberships shall be entitled to two votes at a General Meeting.
- (c) Members of the Society may elect to be (jointly) members of the Society and of any Section on payment of an additional subscription for each Section. Membership of any Section alone shall be available in the same categories as defined in paragraph (b) above and subject to the same conditions as in paragraph (a) above. Such membership of the Society shall pertain only to the Section(s) nominated, and such members shall have no voting rights or other entitlements within the Society as a whole. Paid up Ordinary members, Ordinary Household and Corporate members of any Section, but not Student members, shall be entitled to one copy of any annual Report published by that Section during the year of their membership. Paid up, Ordinary and Corporate members of any Section, but not Student members, shall be entitled to one vote at a General Meeting of the Section; Ordinary Household memberships shall be entitled to two votes at a General Meeting of the Section.
- (d) The Council may terminate or refuse any membership for reasons considered prejudicial to the Society's interests, or for failure to pay overdue subscriptions.
- (e) No member may commit the Society to any course of action or express views in the name of the Society without prior Council approval.

RULE 7. LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Life membership shall be granted in recognition of services to the Society on the nomination of the Council and awarded at the next Annual General Meeting. A Life member shall be entitled to the same rights as an Ordinary member.

RULE 8. SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscription rates appropriate to each class of membership shall be recommended by the Council and submitted to the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting for approval. Subscriptions shall be due on the first day of January in each year; the Council shall review the continued membership of those whose subscriptions are more than six months in arrears.

RULE 9. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- a) The Annual General Meeting shall be held at a time and place to be decided by the Council, and all members shall receive at least twenty-one days' notice thereof. The Secretary shall submit the Council's Report on the progress of the Society, and the Treasurer shall submit the Statement of Accounts completed to the preceding 31st December and examined by an independent person approved at the previous Annual General Meeting.
- (b) The Annual General Meeting may also deal with any special matter which the Council brings before the members. It may also consider any motion proposed by a member. Any motion from a member for consideration at the Annual General Meeting must be in writing, signed by the proposer and seconder, and received by the Secretary at least 10 days before the meeting, to enable distribution to members.
- (c) Decisions at the Annual General Meeting shall be taken by a simple majority of voting members present.
- (d) The Recorders shall be invited to present brief oral or written reports to the Annual General Meeting.

RULE 10. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

The Council may, at any time, convene a Special General Meeting, and must do so at the request in writing of twelve voting members. Members shall receive at least seven days' notice of a Special General Meeting and the purpose for which it is being convened. At a Special General Meeting only the business for which the meeting was convened shall be considered. Decisions at a Special General Meeting shall be taken by a simple majority of voting members present.

RULE 11. FORM OF MEETINGS

Under these rules, the expression 'meeting' includes meetings which are in person, online, or a combination of the two, except where inconsistent with any legal obligation, and may be:

- a) a physical meeting
- b) a video conference, an internet video facility or similar electronic method allowing simultaneous visual and audio participation, or
- c) telephone conferencing.

RULE 12. MINUTES

Minutes shall be kept of the Annual General Meeting, Special General and Council Meetings. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting and of any Special General Meeting shall be the first business of the following Annual General Meeting. A copy of the minutes of a Council

meeting shall be sent to each Council member before the next Council meeting. Minutes of these meetings will be available for inspection by members of the Society upon written request to the Secretary.

RULE 13. FUNDS

The funds of the Society shall be held in the name of the Society and shall be controlled by resolutions of the Council. They shall be used only for the objects of the Society. A member shall not receive direct or indirect payment for services, or for anything other than expenses approved by the Council, but this rule shall not preclude the Council from making grants to individual members in furtherance of the objectives of the Society.

14. RECORDERS

The Council shall appoint Recorders for various branches of natural history, and each shall prepare a report for publication in the Journal.

RULE 15. DISSOLUTION OR MERGING OF THE SOCIETY

Any resolution to dissolve the Society or to merge with another organisation must be approved by the Council and by a majority decision of the voting members as ascertained by a ballot of all the voting members counted at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting. In the event of a dissolution or a merger, no part of the Society's funds or possessions shall be given to members but these shall be wholly devoted to exclusively charitable objects similar to those of the Society as approved by the Council.

RULE 16. SOCIETY RULES

Rules shall not be made or altered except by a majority decision of voting members present at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting, and no alteration may be made which shall cause the Society to cease to be charitable at law. A copy of the rules shall be available on the Society's website.