NORTHUMBERLAND ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

CONSTITUTION OF THE SOCIETY

1. Name of the Society

a. The Society will be called “Northumberland Astronomical Society”.

b. A short version of the Society’s name for use in logos and promotional materials will be “NASTRO”.

2. Aims of the Society

a. The aims of the Society will be to promote awareness and understanding within the fields of astronomy and cosmology, as well as encouraging active involvement and training.

b. The main region of activity will be within the Northumberland community, bringing together those with an interest in astronomy and to carry out observations and astronomical research.

c. To fulfil its aims, the Society may from time to time :

   a. hold NASTRO meetings, lectures and training sessions.

   b. arrange joint meetings with other groups and bodies in Northumberland that is commensurate with the Society’s aims

   c. arrange visits to astronomical venues and liaise with other societies with similar aligned aims.

   d. organise observational programmes and instruction classes in the use of instruments.

   e. provide and maintain an observatory together with any other equipment that may be bought or donated for the use of the Society

   f. to be involved with any other activities to advance the aims of the Society whilst maintaining its foundational ethos.

3. Definitions

a. “The Society” – Northumberland Astronomical Society

b. “AGM” – Annual General Meeting of the Society

c. “The Committee” – the General Committee of the Society

d. “CM” – Committee Meetings of the Society

e. “OM” – Ordinary Meetings open meetings of the Society

f. “EGM” – closed Extraordinary General Meetings of the Society

4. Membership

a. Membership of the Society will be open to any person, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, age (above 14 years of age), gender or ability, who completes a membership application form and pays the relevant yearly subscription as determined by the Annual General Meeting of the Society Members.

b. Persons below 14 years of age are welcome to attend OMs free of charge but must be accompanied at all times by an adult guardian.

c. The Committee shall have the right to refuse membership on reasonable grounds which must be documented and presented to the applicant.

d. The term of each membership will last from the October 1st to September 30th of the following calendar year.

e. The Society will try to adopt a membership approach which tries to ensure no one is prevented from becoming a member on purely financial grounds. At the same time the Society does rely upon its membership subscriptions to cover its running costs. The membership categories will from time to time be reviewed to ensure the Society is reacting to changes within Society. The current list of Membership Types is available in Appendix E.

f. The Committee reserves the right to ask for proof of eligibility for participation in family and/or unwaged memberships.

g. Honorary Membership, which is membership without the need to pay fees, may be granted by the Committee on a case-by-case basis. This award may be given for exceptional, consistent and long-term work beneficial to the Society. The duration of the honorary membership is at the discretion of the Committee.

h. All members may attend and speak at OM and EGM, but only those who have paid the subscription agreed at the previous AGM may vote. Each member is entitled to one vote.

i. The primary method of communication between the Society and its members is through email. It is the responsibility of the member to provide a valid email address.

5. Subscriptions

a. Subscriptions will be reduced during the year on a sliding scale, as agreed by the AGM and shown on the website and registration form.

b. All existing members wishing to continue membership must apply for renewal of membership by paying the appropriate subscription fee, where applicable, at the end of the current membership year.

c. Existing members wishing to continue membership but unable to renew on time may request an additional ‘grace’ period until the OM at the end of the following month. Membership will be deemed to have expired if no renewal is forthcoming at the end of this period.

6. Officers of the Society

a. The Officers of the Society are as follows:

    a. Chairperson

    b. Secretary

    c. Treasurer

b. The Officers detailed above are mandated for the on-going operation of the Society and if a position remains vacant without any permanent or temporary replacement, the Committee must notify the Society's membership at the next OM of the requirement to dissolve the Society (see section 11)

c. Officers are appointed by the Committee and must be de facto members of that Committee, with any appointment being ratified by the full membership at the next AGM.

7. Committee

a. The affairs of NASTRO shall be managed by a Committee consisting of the Officers of the Society, as described previously, and other members of the Society in an ex-officio capacity who may be elected to the Committee (see b. below) or appointed from time to time by the Committee (see c. below).

b. Members of the Committee shall be elected during an AGM and shall remain as Committee Members until the next AGM, at which time they shall be eligible for re-election. This will include ex-officio members previously appointed by the Committee during the preceding year.

c. The Committee may appoint or remove additional ex-officio Committee Members at any time subject to later ratification by a simple majority vote at an EGM.

d. Members of NASTRO proposed for membership of the Committee, should ideally be nominated in advance, through notification being sent to the Secretary ahead of the AGM and requiring a seconder at the AGM by a simple show of hands. If for any reason, the nominated person is unable to attend the AGM, their nomination may still be proposed by the Chairperson, as long as the nominated member has confirmed their willingness to stand.

e. The Committee shall have a quorum if four members of the Committee are in attendance (either physical or virtually). If the Chairperson is not present, the Committee may elect a temporary chairperson for that meeting only. Except where otherwise specifically provided by the Constitution or by any resolution passed in an EGM, the Committee shall regulate its own business.

f. The Committee is empowered to make subsidiary rules relating to the conduct of NASTRO, provided that such rules are not inconsistent with the provisions or spirit of the Constitution or of any resolution passed in an EGM.

g. For the effective operation of the Society, ex-officio members may, from time to time, be asked to fulfil additional roles and responsibilities (see appendix B) for various time periods.

8. Meetings

a. The Society will have four core classification of "Meetings" :-

   I. Ordinary Meetings (OM)

   II. Committee Meetings (CM)

   III. Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM)

   IV. Annual General Meetings (AGM).

b. The venue and details for any of these Meetings will be communicated to members announcements at previous meeting or via email.

c. If appropriate, meetings may be held virtually using an agreed platform for which the required attendees must have access e.g. Zoom.

d. OM are open to all members and unless impractical, to any additional members of the public. The frequency and timing of such meetings will be agreed by the Committee in advance. OM are normally where the majority of the Society's core aims and objectives are achieved. In rare instance they may also incorporate Extraordinary General Meetings to present and agree constitutional changes of the Society.

e. Committee Meetings (CM) are the platform where matters pertaining to the running of the Society are open to discussion, resolution and action. Only the elected or appointed Committee members would normally attend but other members may attend upon invitation.

f. EGM's would, if necessary, take place at the same time and venue as an OM. Any decisions required would be voted upon by those Members present. Because of the importance of such EGM's at least 7 days' notice must be given to the membership detailing the time and venue as well as to the matters requiring an EGM to be organised.

g. OM's will normally be run by a Committee Member. CMs and EGMs would normally be led by the Chairperson or a proxy, acceptable to the other members in attendance.

h. An AGM will be held at the time of the last OM in September.

   I. Notice of the AGM should be given to members at least 30 days prior. Notice may be given verbally to members, by email and by posting a notice on the Society website – nastro.org.uk

   II. Voting at an AGM will be by any means the members present wish.

   III. Each Member of the Society shall be entitled to one vote.

   IV. The Chair will not participate in voting unless votes are tied. In this case the Chair shall be entitled to a casting vote.

   V. Members must advise the Secretary, by email, of any matters they would like to be discussed at the AGM no later than 7 days prior to the date of the AGM. The Committee has the discretion to move requested issues, deemed to require further detailed discussion, over to the next OM/EGM following the AGM.

   VI. The business of the AGM shall be to:

      1. Confirm the minutes of the previous AGM and any EGMs held since the previous AGM.

      2. Receive the audited accounts for the year from the Treasurer.

      3. Receive an annual report from the Chairperson

4. Receive annual reports from any other members of the Committee with specific responsibilities not already covered by the Chairperson.
5. Elect the Officers of the Society and other Committee Members for the coming year.
6. Review subscription rates and agree them for the next year.
7. Transact any such other business received by the Secretary from Members.

9. Finances

a. NASTRO's Financial Year shall end on the date agreed in Appendix C. This may be changed by the proposal of the Treasurer subsequently agreed by the Committee

b. The assets of NASTRO shall be under the control of the Committee and no disbursement of funds shall take place unless authorised by the Committee at a duly appointed Committee Meeting. Monies received by NASTRO shall either be paid to the credit bank account operated for the purpose in the full name of NASTRO at such bank(s) as the Committee may from time to time decide or shall otherwise be properly invested by the agreement of the Committee. All cheques or other instructions given to any such bank or relating to investments are to be authorised by any two of the Chair, the Treasurer and the Secretary.

c. The Treasurer shall keep proper books of account and shall produce an annual statement of account.

10. Discipline

a. Any member who acts in such a way as to contravene this Constitution, damage equipment, misappropriate Society funds or property, disrupt meetings, harass other members, or in any way acts irresponsibly, or brings the Society into disrepute with the public or its members, or acts in the opinion of the Committee, in any way outside of the spirit of the Society's aims, shall render themselves liable to disciplinary action.

b. Disciplinary action may entail withdrawal of certain privileges of membership or expulsion from the Society and any action resolved by the Committee will be final. This shall be decided at a Committee Meeting.

c. The errant member shall be invited, verbally or by email, to defend themselves at the Committee Meeting.

d. The Committee's decision shall be communicated to the errant member at the meeting or as soon as possible afterwards, either verbally or by email.

11. Data Protection

a. The Committee shall act to ensure the Society's compliance with UK Data Protection legislation in order to ensure lawful use and protection of personal data. To this end the Society maintains a document setting out it's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices (Appendix D).

12. Dissolution

a. The Society shall be dissolved if :-

   I. at any OM, a resolution is passed calling for the dissolution of the Society. The Secretary shall immediately convene an EGM of the Society to be held not less than seven days and not more than thirteen days from the date of the resolution acceptance.

   II. If, at this EGM, the resolution is carried by at least two-thirds of the Members present at the meeting, the General Committee shall thereupon, or at such date as shall have been specified in the resolution, proceed to realise the assets of the Society and discharge all debts and liabilities of the Society.

   III. After discharging all debts and liabilities of the Society, the remaining assets shall be distributed to some other voluntary society having similar aims and objects to those of NASTRO. No disbarment assets will be made to Members.

b. Or if the Society is in breach of clause 6.b, above.

13. Changes to the Constitution

a. This Constitution may be added to, changed, or replaced by a resolution passed by 75% majority of NASTRO members present and voting at the AGM or specially convened EGM for this sole purpose.

Constitution approved by the unanimous vote of members present at EGM held 14th November 2024

Appendix A (21/10/2024)

Job descriptions of the obligatory Officers of the Society

Chairperson

To chair meetings and ensure that the rules of the constitution are adhered to.

To act as a point of contact in the Society's relationship with the Northumberland Wildlife Trust.

Act as signatory for the Society bank account.

Provide support to other committee members.

Secretary

Act as Joint Controller and Processor for UK GDPR.

Maintain a current email distribution list of members and appropriate members' record.

Record, write and issue minutes of AGM and EGMs.

Send out information to members regarding Ordinary Meetings (Thursdays), information received from other sources and general information.

Act as signatory for bank account.

Provide support to other committee members.

Treasurer

To regulate and account for the Society's financial affairs.

To advise the Committee of the financial position throughout the year.

To ensure that payments are made promptly.

Act as signatory for bank account.

Act as Processor for UK GDPR.

Provide support to other committee members.

Ensure FAS membership and insurances (public liability and observatory) remain current.

Appendix B (21/10/2024)

Job descriptions of the optional Ex-Officio Members of the Committee

Vice/Joint Chair

To deputise for the Chair.

Provide support to other committee members.

Act as Joint Controller for UK GDPR.

Members' Liaison

To liaise with the general membership of the Society.

To act as member representative during the CM's for non-Committee member requests, proposals.

Act as a source of information to general Members as to the activities of the Committee.

Observatory Management

Take responsibility for maintaining the Observatory and the equipment which forms part of the observatory.

Act as the main keyholder for the Observatory.

Act as the NASTRO main keyholder for the Visitor Centre and Nature Reserve gates.

Meeting Coordination

To liaise with the Committee regarding the future framework of the Society's OM's.

Help identify external speakers and arrange invitations to speak at OM's.

Liaise with local community groups to instigate and coordinate outreach events.

Gather feedback via the Members Representative or directly from members or outreach participants for future planning.

Organise venues for Society meetings if necessary.

Educational Requirements

To investigate and identify the training needs of the membership particularly with regard to achieving the Objects of the Society.

Implement training sessions or programmes based on the current needs of the membership.

Provide opportunities for members to become trained to use the observatory or other equipment.

Provide input to the Society's outreach programme.

To be the main point of contact with regard to any contacts with educational organisations.

Web and Social Media Requirements

Create/Maintain NASTRO's web footprint. These would include the NASTRO web site, the NASTRO Members area, Facebook and any other presence. It would also cover Webmaster responsibilities such as :-

1. Maintenance of the website. Updates to the content may be delegated but the webmaster would be responsible for things like:
    a. Authorising "Editor" permissions
    b. Domain name renewal
    c. Account maintenance with provider
2. Email
    a. Creation and management of new and existing email address
    b. Transfer of officer email addresses to new officers as appropriate
    c. Account maintenance with current provider.

Publicity

To look after the marketing, promotions, print and PR requirements and opportunities of the Society.

Safeguarding Officer

Maintain the Society's' governing documentation, such as the Constitution, Child Protection Policy and GDPR policy.

Appendix C (21/10/2024)

Society Dates

Financial Year

The current agreed end-date of the financial year is 30th September.

OM Frequencies

The intention is to hold two OM meetings per month but this may sometimes drop to one per month if appropriate.

The meetings will be held in Hauxley Discovery Centre where possible and will be on the second and last Thursday of the month.

The exceptions to the above will be December where a meeting will be held on the second Thursday only and August where no OM will be held.

Appendix D (21/10/2024)

Data Protection

NASTRO Privacy Notice – date as of Appendix D

Our registered contact details are :-

Name: The Secretary

Address:

E-mail: secretary@nastro.org.uk

Our policy is to hold the most minimal data footprint that is commensurate to that required to process a Society membership.

To this end we collect :-

- Member's Name
- Member's Email
- Only when it's offered to the Society for a specific purpose, we may store a telephone number
- Share within the Committee Y/N

Note/ Although Attendees area asked to sign in at the start of a meeting, giving a name, residential town and whether they are a member, this data is not held in any electronic format. It is used for statistical purposes only to provide Member/Non-Member/All totals with the option to analyse by origin. The paper sign-in sheets are held for one complete year and are then destroyed following the next AGM.

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the lawful bases we rely on for processing the information above are:

The small amount of data detailed above that is held, is held with your consent. As a Member you can remove your consent at any time. You can do this by contacting the Secretary of the Society at secretary@nastro.org.uk However please note that removal of your details will immediately curtail your membership for obvious reasons.

The Member information which we hold will be securely held and we do not share your information with any persons or organisations outside of the Society

Occasionally it may be helpful for a Committee Member to request your email (e.g. to contact you about your participation in an event). If you have agreed to allow your email to be shared with a Committee Member on your membership application form, then the Secretary will share it and note the time/date/requesting person.

Your Membership details will be held until the March after your membership fees have elapsed and then your details will be deleted

Your data protection rights

Under data protection law, you have rights including:

Your right of access - You have the right to ask us for copies of the limited personal information we hold.

Your right to rectification - You have the right to ask us to rectify information you think is inaccurate. You also have the right to ask us to complete information you think is incomplete.

Your right to erasure - You have the right to ask us to erase your personal information.

You are not required to pay any charge for exercising your rights. If you make a request, we have one month to respond to you.

Please contact the Society Secretary at secretary@nastro.org.uk if you wish to make a request.

How to complain

You can also complain to the ICO if you are unhappy with how we have used your data.

The ICO's address:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Helpline number: 0303 123 1113

Appendix E (28/10/2024)

Membership Types

a. Full Member (aged 18+)

b. Junior Member (14-17 years of age and students)

c. Family Membership (up to 2 Adults and up to four children aged 17 and under)

d. Concessions (aged 65+) or Unwaged

e. Honorary Member