

THE CONSTITUTION OF WILTSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

2018

Registered Charity No. 290284

1. NAME

The name of the Society shall be Wiltshire Family History Society.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Society shall be:

- a. To promote and encourage the public study of Family History, Genealogy, Heraldry and Local History with particular reference to Wiltshire.
- b. To promote the preservation, security and accessibility of archival material.

In furtherance of the above objectives but not further or otherwise the Society shall have the following powers:-

- i. To hold lectures and discussions and organise research visits for the Society's members and interested members of the general public.
- ii. To hold and maintain a library of printed and other works for the use of the Society's members and interested members of the general public.
- iii. To preserve, transcribe and publish original source materials, including documents and monumental inscriptions.
- iv. To pursue collaborative actions with similar societies and with established supportive bodies such as churches, libraries, record offices and educational institutions.
- v. To promote and to engage in educational activities including the issue of a regular journal and the publication and sale of other appropriate material.
- vi. To support the activities of The Federation of Family History Societies (Registered Charity No. 1038721) in its pursuit of these and similar objectives.

3. AFFILIATION

The Executive Committee may affiliate the Society with other charitable organisations that have compatible and mutually supportive objectives.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- a. Membership of the Society shall be open to all persons having an interest in the support of the Society's objectives.
- b. Membership subscriptions are for 12 months from date of acceptance, renewable annually. Classes of membership shall be determined by the Executive Committee of the Society and may include, but not be limited to:
 - i. Individual Membership.
 - ii. Family Membership; limited to persons at one address.
 - iii. Institutional Membership.
 - iv. Honorary Membership.

c. Individual membership confers one vote. Family membership confers one vote per subscription. Institutional membership does not confer voting rights. Honorary membership is subscription free membership with voting rights granted by appointment to President or Vice-President or a resolution of the Executive Committee. Only Honorary Members and those Individual and Family Members who have paid their subscription may:

- i. Call for Branch or Society meetings to be held.
- ii. Vote at General Meetings of the Society and its branches.
- iii. Offer themselves for election at Branch or Society level.

d. Subscriptions shall be payable at the date and at the rate determined by the Executive Committee, as set out in the Members' Handbook.

e. Honorary membership may be withdrawn by a resolution of the Executive Committee. Any other member may be removed from membership by a resolution of the Executive Committee if it is in the best interests of the Society that his or her membership is terminated. The member has the right of appeal to a General Meeting of the Society. A resolution to remove a member from membership may only be passed if:

- i. The member has been given at least twenty-one days' notice in writing of the meeting of the Executive Committee at which the resolution will be proposed and the reasons why it is to be proposed.
- ii. The member or, at the option of the member, the member's representative, who need not be a member of the Society, has been allowed to make representation to the meeting.

5. ADMINISTRATION

a. The Society shall be administered by an Executive Committee. The members of that committee are also Trustees of the Society with the responsibility of ensuring that the Society complies with charity law and the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator.

b. The membership of the Executive Committee will comprise six members elected at a General Meeting of the Society, normally the Annual General Meeting (hereinafter known as the AGM) and a representative from each of the Society's branches. The term of Office of all Executive Committee members, including those elected by the Branches (the Branch Representatives) at their previously held AGMs, shall take effect at the conclusion of the Society's AGM. All Executive Committee members shall be eligible for re-election at Society and Branch General Meetings as appropriate.

c. Only members of the Society, at the closing date of nominations, may be elected to the Executive Committee. Nominations shall be submitted in writing to the General Secretary of the Society (or other such person as the Executive Committee of the Society may decide from time-to-time), not less than fourteen days before the date on which the Society's General Meeting is to take place.

d. Branch representatives are members of the Society elected by each of the Branches of the Society at their respective meetings, normally their AGMs. Each Branch may elect one representative. Nominations shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Branch before the Branch meeting is to take place.

e. The Executive Committee shall elect, from within its number, Officers of the Society e.g., Chairman, Vice-Chairman, General Secretary, or such other officers as it may decide from time to time.

f. The Executive Committee shall have the power to elect eligible members of the Society to be members of the Executive Committee in order to fill vacancies on the Executive

Committee that may occur between General Meetings of the Society, up to a maximum of six plus the number of Branch elected representatives. The Executive Committee may also co-opt from time to time persons to act in an advisory role at meetings of the Executive Committee. Such co-opted persons shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting of the Executive Committee.

g. If a member of the Executive Committee is absent for more than fifty percent of the meetings of the Executive Committee in any consecutive twelve-month period the Executive Committee may decide to remove such member from the Executive Committee.

h. If an elected Branch representative cannot attend a particular Executive Committee meeting, the electing Branch may authorise another person to attend the meeting as a temporary spokesperson on behalf of the Branch, but that person shall not be entitled to vote on any motion before the Executive Committee. Should, for whatever reason, a Branch elected representative cease to be a member of the Executive Committee between that Branch's AGMs, the Branch may elect a replacement. This replacement will become a member of the Executive Committee, with the entitlement to vote.

6. BRANCHES

a. The Executive Committee of the Society shall have the power to establish branches in furtherance of the Society's objectives and on such terms as this Committee shall prescribe. In the event of a Branch being formed any property or funds acquired by it shall belong to the Society.

b. Each Branch so established shall comply with and be subject to regulations approved by the Executive Committee, as set out in the Branch Handbook. Such regulations shall include provisions dealing with the maintenance of all Branch funds and an acknowledgment that the Branch forms part of the Society and that it shall comply with this Constitution and act in pursuance of its objectives.

c. A Branch may be suspended or dissolved by a resolution of the Executive Committee or dissolved on a resolution at a General Meeting of the Society. Such resolutions shall give directions and instructions as to the transfer of assets and responsibility for liability for the group during suspension or following dissolution as the case may be.

d. Each Branch shall hold an AGM at which it elects its representative for the Society's Executive Committee. The Branch Secretary shall ensure that the date of such meeting is published in advance in the Society's journal. This meeting shall be held prior to the Society's General Meeting at which elections are to take place. All decisions at Branch meetings shall be by a simple majority of members present.

e. No member of the Society may vote for more than one Branch Representative in any membership year, except that which is provided for in Clause 5(h).

7. MEETINGS

a. The Society shall hold General Meetings, which shall be either AGMs or Extraordinary General Meetings (hereinafter referred to as EGM). An AGM shall be held once in each financial year and within six months of the end of the Society's financial year when the Trustees shall present their report and accounts on the preceding year and elections take place. Notice of this meeting shall be given to the membership with prior written notice of the business to be discussed at least twenty-eight days prior to the meeting by post or in the Society's Journal.

- b. An EGM may be convened by the Executive Committee or at the request of twenty-five members with prior written notice of the business to be discussed notified to the membership by post or in the Society's journal at least twenty-eight days before such meeting.
- c. Except as specified in Clauses 8 and 11 decisions at meetings shall be by a simple majority of members present.
- d. If at any meeting the result of a vote is equal the member chairing the meeting may use a casting or second vote.
- e. At an Executive Committee meeting a quorum shall be fifty per cent plus one, to the nearest higher whole number, of the current members of the Committee entitled to vote. At an EGM of the Society a quorum shall be ten per cent of the Society's membership or fifty members whichever is the lesser. At an AGM of the Society a quorum shall be ten members.
- f. All committees and work groups shall be approved and governed by the Executive Committee, to which they will regularly report in writing on their activities.

8. CONSTITUTION

- a. Notification of proposed amendments to this constitution, together with notice of the General Meeting to deal with the proposed amendments, shall be given to the membership by post or in the Society's journal. No alteration or amendment shall be made to the constitution that would cause the Society to cease to be a charity in law. The constitution shall be amended only if three-quarters of members attending the meeting vote for such amendment.
- b. Proposals for amendments to this constitution shall be submitted to the Executive Committee at least fifty-six days prior to the day on which the AGM or EGM is to be held. Voting may be by show of hands and the chairman shall have a casting vote or a second vote.
- c. The Executive Committee shall send to the Charity Commissioners a copy of any amendments under this clause as soon as practicable.

9. FINANCE

- a. The income and property of the Society whencesoever derived shall be applied solely towards the promotion and execution of the objectives of the Society as defined in Clause 2 above and no portion thereof shall be paid, transferred directly or indirectly in any manner by way of profit to any member of the Executive Committee or the Society. This rule shall not prevent the payment in good faith of reasonable and proper repayment of out-of-pocket expenses incurred by a member on behalf of the Society.
- b. The Executive Committee shall have the power subject to any consents required by law to sell, lease or dispose of all or any property of the Society.
- c. The Executive Committee shall have the 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 repayment of the money so borrowed.
- d. The Executive Committee shall have power to employ such officers as are necessary for the proper pursuit of the Society's objectives. Such officers shall not be members of the Executive Committee, but may be members of the Society.
- e. The Executive Committee shall cause proper books of account to be prepared with respect to all sums of money received and expended by the Society and the matters in respect of which such receipts and expenditures take place. The Society's Accounts must be prepared in accordance with the provisions of any Statement of Recommended Practice issued by the Charity Commission.

f. The Executive Committee must comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1993, and any subsequent Charities Act, with regard to the keeping of accounting records for the Society and preparation of:

- i. Annual statements of account for the Society;
- ii. An annual report and its transmission to the Charity Commission;
- iii. An annual return and its transmission to the Charity Commission.

g. At least once each year the Society's accounts shall be independently examined and presented in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commissioners. The Society's accounting year shall be from 1 April to 31 March.

h. A copy of the accounts shall be presented for approval to the members at the AGM and a copy shall be made available to all members of the Society as soon as practicable.

10. PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

a. The Executive Committee shall have power to invite such members of the Society as it shall think fit to be President and up to five members to be Vice-Presidents. The Executive Committee shall recommend to the members at an appropriate General Meeting such person or persons for election who consent to their nominations.

b. The position of President and Vice-President shall be honorary and carry honorary membership. Neither the President nor a Vice-President shall be a member of the Executive Committee. They shall be entitled to receive notice of and to attend, speak and vote at General Meetings of the Society. The President, or a Vice-President in the absence of the President, shall chair all General Meetings.

c. The President and Vice-Presidents shall hold office until the conclusion of the appropriate General Meeting following the sixth anniversary of his or her becoming President or Vice-President and, should the Executive Committee so recommend, shall be eligible for immediate re-election for another term of six years.

d. The President or a Vice-President may be removed by members voting on a resolution at an appropriate Society General Meeting, normally the AGM.

11. DISSOLUTION

The Society may be dissolved by a resolution passed by not less than three-quarters of those members present at either an AGM or an EGM called for the purpose and for which twenty-eight days prior notice has been given to the membership in writing. Such a resolution shall give instructions for the disposal of the assets held by the Society to another charitable institution having objectives similar to those of the Society after all debts and liabilities have been paid.

12. HOLDING TRUSTEES

The Executive Committee may appoint not less than three persons to hold any land or property held by or in trust for the Society. Holding Trustees may act only in accordance with lawful directions of the Executive Committee. If they do so they will not be liable for the acts and defaults of the Executive Committee or of the members of the Society. The Executive Committee may vest land or property in the Official Custodian.