

ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY CONSTITUTION

Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society is a small unincorporated association and this constitution reflects this status.

1. Name

The name of the society is the Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society, hereafter referred to as the Society.

2. The Purposes of the Society are:-

1. To stimulate, amongst Society members and members of the public, interest in and knowledge of natural history in general, and of the natural history of the Borough of Rochdale and surrounding areas.
2. To help conserve the natural history and habitats of the Borough of Rochdale and surrounding areas and to encourage others to do likewise.

3. Achieving the Purpose

1. To produce a programme of activities to include indoor and outdoor events, trips, and surveys.
2. To record observations of natural history particularly within the Borough of Rochdale, and to share these records with any appropriate body.
3. To lobby for the protection of wildlife in all its forms particularly within the Borough of Rochdale
4. To co-operate with other like-minded organisations with similar purposes
5. To raise funds, receive grants and donations to carry out the work of the Society
6. To publicise the Society and its programme
7. Do anything which is lawful and necessary to achieve the society's purposes.

4. Membership

1. Membership of the society shall be open to any individual aged 18 or over showing genuine interest in the Society's purpose, who has paid their annual subscription and who agrees to abide by the Society's constitution.
2. Membership can be Life Membership or an Annual Membership that may be renewed.
3. Membership of any member may be terminated for good reason by the Society's Steering Group. The member has a right to be heard by the Steering Group before a final decision is made.
4. Honorary Membership:
 - a. The Steering Group may award Honorary Membership to anyone who has shown outstanding service to the society.
 - b. Honorary Membership may also be awarded by the Steering Group to young persons between the ages of 12 and 18 years subject to the following requirements:

- The young person must consistently demonstrate great enthusiasm for the natural world and an exemplary attitude towards the Society and its members
 - The young person attends events accompanied by a parent or guardian who takes full responsibility for their wellbeing
 - Honorary membership ceases on the young person's 18th birthday, when they are able to join the Society as a full member
- c. Honorary membership may be suspended or withdrawn at any time by the Steering Group
 - d. Honorary membership is at the sole discretion of the Steering Group, subject to confirmation at the following AGM.
 - e. For clarity, Honorary Membership is for exceptional circumstances only, and is not an automatic right or privilege of, for example, long service.
 - f. No more than 10% of membership can comprise Honorary membership, and Honorary members do not have voting rights.

5. Management of the Society

1. The affairs of the Society shall be managed by a Steering Group, consisting of the Officers and the leaders of the four Teams: Indoor, Outdoor, Conservation and Education, and Publicity
2. The Society must have the following officers:-
 - A Chairperson – this position may be shared
 - A Secretary
 - A Treasurer
3. Officers must be a member of the Society and will be elected at the AGM.
4. Any vacant officer position may be filled by co-opting a member, however such officers must stand for election at the next AGM
5. In addition there will be four team leaders from the Indoor, Outdoor, Conservation and Education and Publicity team. These leaders are selected by other members of each team.
6. The Steering Group's main purpose is to oversee and co-ordinate the management of the Society and to set its strategic purpose. The day-to-day management of the Society's activities is delegated to the four Activity Teams, who are responsible to and report to the Steering Group through the team leaders.
7. There may be a deputy Treasurer to cover for the Treasurer in their absence.
8. Team leaders may be accompanied at Steering Group meetings by members of their team when issues concerning their team are being discussed, but they will not be able to vote or take part in decision-making by the Steering Group.
9. A Minutes Secretary may be co-opted by the Steering Group to record its decisions, but would not be a formal member of the Steering Group. The minutes of each meeting shall be confirmed at the next meeting and made available to all Steering Group members.

10. A member of the Steering Group will be the named Safeguarding Officer for the Society. If necessary, a member may be co-opted to fulfil this role.
11. A quorum for a Steering Group meeting shall be four members of the Group
12. Steering Group decisions may be determined by a majority vote, with the Chairperson having a second or casting vote.
13. The Steering Group will maintain an updated job specification for each of the officer posts listed in 2 above.
14. Members of the Society shall be invited and encouraged to join one or more of the four Activity Teams to help share the task of running the Society.

6. Annual and Special General Meetings

1. An Annual General Meeting of the Society shall be held within 18 months of the previous AGM, with members being given at least 14 days' notice of the meeting and an outline of the business of the meeting. Minutes must be kept of the AGM
2. A quorum for any General meeting shall be 25% of the Society's membership
3. Every member has one vote.
4. The business of the AGM shall include:
 - Election of officers where necessary.
 - A report by the Treasurer on the Society's financial affairs including recommendations for membership fees and coach fees for the next year, and approval of the statement of accounts,
 - A report by the Chairperson on the Society's activities during the preceding year,
 - Appointment of an independent examiner of the Society's accounts for the forthcoming year.
 - Any motions or resolutions that have been proposed by a member and seconded by another, and received no later than 7 days before the AGM
5. Officers will be elected by a majority vote by paid-up Society members at each AGM, for a period of one year. They are eligible for re-election for a maximum of five years.
6. Nominations for Officer posts must be proposed by one member of the Society and seconded by another, and must be received by the Secretary at least 7 days before the AGM. In exceptional circumstances if insufficient nominations have been received prior to the AGM the Chairperson *may* accept nominations at the meeting from the floor.
7. If necessary a Special General Meeting may be held at the request of the Steering Group or Society members with at least 14 days' notice given together with the agenda to be discussed.
8. In the event of a tied ballot at any General meeting of the Society, the Chairperson of the AGM will have the casting vote.

7. Finance

1. The Society must keep accounts. The annual accounts can be seen by anyone on request.
2. Money and property must only be used for the Society's purpose

3. The Society's financial year shall run from 1st September to 31st August the following calendar year.
4. The Society shall hold a Bank Account in the name of the Society. The Treasurer and two other Officers shall be the authorised signatories, with any two of the three able to sign cheques, one of whom should be the Treasurer.
5. There shall be an annual membership subscription, the level of which shall be set at each AGM and shall become due after the start of the next Financial Year
6. An annual budget shall be produced and approved by the Steering Group.
7. An adequate insurance cover shall be arranged for the Society.

8. Amendments to the Constitution

1. Alterations to the Constitution can only be made at an AGM or SGM.
2. The Constitution may be altered by a two-thirds majority of those attending a General meeting.
3. In disputes arising over the interpretation of the Constitution, the Steering Group's decision will be final.

9. Emergencies

1. In the event of any emergency not provided for or not clear in this Constitution the Steering Group shall have the power to deal with such matter at its discretion.

10. Dissolution of the Society

1. A decision to wind up the Society shall only be taken by a majority vote at an AGM or SGM. Members may vote in person, by nominating a proxy, by post or by e-mail.
2. In the event of a motion being passed to wind up the Society, the Steering Group shall have the power to dispose of the net assets (after any liabilities and allowing for winding up costs) to such organisations that have kindred interests to the Society and shall publish details of the disposals.

This constitution was adopted by the Society's AGM on 14th September 2017 and amended at the SGM of 5th April 2018

This constitution was further amended at the Society's AGMs on 8th December 2022 and 15th January 2025.