

THE SIGMA CONSTITUTION



1. NAME

1.1. The name of the society is “Moray’s Astronomy Club, SIGMA” hereafter known as SIGMA.

2. AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

2.1. SIGMA exists to promote the awareness of, interest in and enjoyment of astronomy within a friendly and stimulating environment, hosting educational, practical and social activities in the local area that are accessible to all ages and levels of knowledge.

2.2. SIGMA seeks to achieve its aims through a varied programme of meetings, activities and events that will include talks, exhibitions, trips to places of astronomical interest, expeditions, observational sessions, technical workshops, sidewalk events and social events.

3. THE COMMITTEE

3.1. The affairs of SIGMA will be managed by a committee, which shall consist of a Chairman, a Treasurer, and a Secretary, together with other officers of the society that the committee may from time to time deem necessary to appoint. (AGM2010)

3.2. The SIGMA committee shall normally meet every two months.

3.3. Each committee member must report at each committee meeting all activities undertaken in their capacity as an office bearer.

3.4. Members of the committee shall be elected in the General Meetings and shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting, when they shall be eligible for re-election.

3.5. A vacancy in the committee may be filled by the committee appointing a member or fellow committee member.

3.6. Members of SIGMA proposed for membership of the committee at General Meetings of the society shall be nominated by another member of SIGMA, or nominated by the committee. Nominations shall be accompanied by a statement from the nominee confirming their willingness to be elected to the committee and, if relevant, to the position of officer.

3.7. More than 50% of the members of the committee (rounded up) shall form a quorum.

3.8. If the Chairman is not present, the committee may elect a temporary Chairman for the committee meeting only.

3.9. The committee shall regulate its own business, except where otherwise specifically provided by the constitution or by any resolution passed at a General Meeting.

3.10. The committee is empowered to make subsidiary rules relating to the conduct of SIGMA, provided that such rules are consistent with the provisions and the spirit of the constitution and any resolution passed in a General Meeting.

3.11. Any committee member who has failed to attend three consecutive committee meetings, or four committee meetings since election to office without justifiable reason shall be deemed to have resigned from the committee.

3.12. The society shall be empowered at a General Meeting to invite a person to hold the honorary non-executive position of President of the society. This position will normally be held for life but may be revoked at any time by a majority vote at a General Meeting.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1. Application for membership of SIGMA shall be open to all interested individuals, parties and bodies. Persons under the age of 18 will not be charged subscriptions, but will not be paid-up members with an entitlement to vote. Any person over the age of 16 may apply for Ordinary or Student (paid-up) membership, though para 4.10 requirements for a parent/guardian must still be met. (EGM Oct 2010)

4.2. Membership shall be in four categories:

4.2.1. Ordinary Membership is for individuals.

4.2.2. Student Membership is for individuals who are in full time education.

4.2.3. Concessionary Membership may be applied for by individuals over the age of 60, and is to be at 75% of the ordinary membership rate. The committee shall be advised of all applications, but names must not be published in notes or minutes to respect the individual's right to confidentiality. (EGM Oct 2010)

4.2.4. Honorary Life Membership is for individuals elected by the committee in recognition of outstanding and dedicated service to SIGMA over a long period of time.

4.3. The committee shall have the right to refuse on reasonable grounds any application for membership (or application for other services provided by SIGMA) without explanation to the applicant.

4.4. The committee shall have the power, by a majority decision of the committee, to refuse or reject renewal of membership, or suspend or terminate the membership of any individual, party or affiliated body without notice or explanation upon proper cause being shown that such action is in the best interests of the society.

4.5. All registered members may attend and speak at all Ordinary and General meetings. Only paid-up members may vote. Each fully paid-up member has one vote. The Chairman will have a casting vote.

4.5.1. Paid-up members may cast their vote at General meetings in person, by proxy or by post using the forms and system provided by the committee for that purpose. All proxy or postal votes must be received by the deadlines set by the committee, which must be reasonable and achievable. Votes received after such deadlines shall be deemed invalid. Spoiled voting papers shall be deemed invalid but must be retained for inspection for one year from the date of General meeting. (EGM Oct 2010)

4.6. The society may affiliate with, or accept affiliation with other societies or organisations upon such terms as the committee may deem appropriate. As of February 2014 under a reciprocal arrangement SIGMA is affiliated with HAS and members may attend each other's monthly meetings and events.

4.7. Membership shall continue until either the member resigns or the membership is terminated. A member shall be deemed to have resigned if the subscription is not paid within such a time of its becoming due as the committee may reasonably decide.

4.8. Members leaving the society for whatever reason must return all society property within two weeks of the termination of their membership.

4.9. Members borrowing SIGMA equipment must sign a Liability Acceptance Form. Members who are under 18 years of age may borrow equipment only when Liability Acceptance Form has been signed by their parent or guardian.

4.10. When attending society events, as described in 2.2, children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent/ guardian or an adult authorized by the child's parent/ guardian. Children aged 16-18 may attend monthly meetings on their own, but may not attend other activities unless accompanied by a parent/ guardian or an adult authorized by the child's parent/ guardian. Children are not to be left alone with any adult at any of SIGMA's activities unless that person is a parent/ guardian or an adult authorized by the child's parent/ guardian. (AGM 2013)

5. SUBSCRIPTIONS

5.1. Subscriptions will be levied to cover the ordinary running costs of the society. Additional charges may be made to members for participation in particular activities or events organized by SIGMA, or for other services provided by the society.

5.2. Each member shall pay their first year's subscription, or fraction of, on submitting their application for membership and annually on 1st January thereafter.

5.3. Removed by Resolution 9 passed at AGM held on 10th January 2003.

5.4. Annual subscriptions are due 1st January each year.

6. ACCOUNTS

6.1. SIGMA's financial year shall be from 1st January to 31st December.

6.2. The assets of SIGMA shall be under the control of the committee. No responsibility for unauthorised expenditure will be accepted by the society.

6.3. All monies received by SIGMA shall either be placed to the credit of one or more bank accounts operated for the purpose in the name of SIGMA at such bank(s) as the committee may from time to time decide or shall otherwise be properly managed by the committee. All cheques and other instructions given to any such bank or relating to investments are to be signed by any two of four committee members authorised by the committee to do so.

6.4. The committee shall keep proper records of the accounts that shall be used to provide an annual Statement of Accounts that shall be independently inspected following the end of each financial year by any inspector independent of the committee. (AGM 2011)

7. INSURANCE

7.1. SIGMA shall take out Public Liability Insurance.

8. MEETINGS

8.1. ORDINARY MEETINGS

Ordinary meetings will normally be held at 7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month. Other meetings and events shall be held whenever possible.

8.2. GENERAL MEETINGS

Written notice of the agenda of all general meetings, whether Annual or Extraordinary, is to be sent to all paid-up members at least two weeks before the date of the meeting. 20% of the fully paid-up membership shall constitute a quorum at all General Meetings. Members wishing to submit items for the agenda of a general meeting should do so to the Secretary, in writing, at least one week before the meeting. (AGM 2010)

8.3. EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called by the committee at any time, and shall be called without delay if more than one half of the fully paid-up members demand it.

8.4. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall normally be held on the first Friday in June. The agenda is to include the minutes of the previous AGM and any EGMs held since then, the annual report presented by the committee, the reports of the Treasurer and of the auditor(s), the amounts of the annual subscription for the next twelve months, any proposed changes in the constitution or any rules, and any other pertinent business.

9. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

9.1. This Constitution (with the exception of Clauses 9 and 10) may be revised, amended, or added to by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority of the fully paid-up members of SIGMA present when voting at a General Meeting.

10. DISSOLUTION OF THE SOCIETY

10.1. The dissolution of SIGMA may be effected by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority of the fully paid-up members of SIGMA present in person at an EGM convened for that purpose of which notice has been served on every then member of SIGMA at their last known address in the UK.

10.2. If a motion to dissolve SIGMA is carried by the required majority, SIGMA 's surplus assets (if any) shall be donated to institutions or organizations which have aims similar to those of SIGMA and that have been selected for such purpose by a simple majority of the fully paid up members present at the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting in 10.1.

11. GREEN LASER POINTERS (AGM2017)

At all SIGMA events to minimise the risks posed by green laser pointers to people and wildlife on the ground and in the air the following rules apply:

11.1. Only members approved by the Committee may use green laser pointers at SIGMA events.

11.2. Laser power output is to be no more than 1mw, currently detailed under UK Government guidelines as Class 1 or 2 devices.

11.3. Green laser pointers are not to be used inside for presentations.

2nd June 2017