

FRIENDS OF WEIR WOOD SOCIETY CONSTITUTION

ORIGINAL: 4th May 2007

Amendment 6: AGM accepted 29th March 2019

Friends of Weir Wood Society

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Weir Wood is an important inland refuge which supports a rich community of breeding birds as well as a diversity and abundance of wintering and passage birds. It has become a site of importance for Great Crested Grebes and has a Heronry. It holds a wide variety of plants, mammals and insect species and it is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The Society has adopted the following aims:

1. To protect and promote wildlife conservation within the statutory Local Nature Reserve.
2. To restore and improve habitat with consent from English Nature (recently renamed Natural England) under the conditions of the SSSI.
3. To promote public awareness of the importance of the site and its vital role in the global environmental network.
4. To seek recognition from environmental authorities of its national importance for Great Crested Grebes.
5. To keep records of the bird species seen, breeding activity and nest box use.
6. To increase knowledge of the biodiversity of plants, mammals and insects present.
7. To set up an archive of local wildlife records and history of the site.
8. To provide information to environmental authorities and to participate in county and national data collection schemes and surveys.
9. To work with the relevant authorities and environmental agencies responsible for conservation management at Weir Wood.
10. To encourage and co-operate with appropriate research projects.
11. To publish, as appropriate, information, survey results and progress reports relating to the wildlife and its conservation.
12. Provide an information website.

In furtherance of the above aims, the Society will:-

1. Publicise its activities in order to attract more members and volunteers to help with maintaining and improving the habitat.
2. Seek grants and sponsorship to support practical conservation work and to improve facilities for wildlife observation and study.
3. Send a representative to any Management Committee to express the independent views of the Society.
4. Assist East Sussex County Council and Southern Water Services Ltd with practical habitat maintenance and improvement also projects and surveys in accordance with any agreed Management Plan for the LNR.
5. Collect existing records (written, oral and photographic) which relate to the site and organise surveys, monitoring of birds, plants, mammals and insects.

6. Assist East Sussex County Council with the preparation of educational material for informing the public, in order to safeguard the habitat and reduce the incidence of trespass and disturbance.
7. Involve the members of the Society in its activities such as “Open Days” to promote and educate both members and the public about the site, and develop ideas for improving public awareness and education.
8. Assist environmental organisations with suitable volunteers to help carry out Weir Wood survey work. Provide suitable liability cover and insurance as necessary to protect the volunteers and the Society when entering Southern Water property when no authorised Ranger is on site.
9. Seek the advice and help of ecological and environmental experts through contact with environmental agencies, universities and other local societies.
10. Provide electronic wildlife records of sightings and data to recognised wildlife bodies.
11. Inform members of the Society of its activities via a newsletter or other publicity.
12. Provide a website for members and the public giving information about the Society and the nature reserve. Provide a secure electronic storage area for Committee documents.

Friends of Weir Wood Society

April 1997 and Rule 8 objective amended May 2007.

April 2014 Amendments New item 12 - Recognising the role of the website.

Aims & Objectives furtherance amendment changes: Item 3 - Committee representations are widened. Item 7 - Scope widened to include our Open Days. Item 8 - Added the required provision of liability cover which should include any necessary insurances. Item 10 - Widened the scope of our wildlife recording for the site.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Aim: The Friends of Weir Wood aims to create the conditions whereby all members are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of gender, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, social economic background, disability, religious or political beliefs, family circumstance, sexual orientation or other irrelevant distinction.

Objective: The declared objective of the Friends of Weir Wood is to be truly open to all sections of the community and to encourage all to participate fully and equally to fulfil their potential.

CONSTITUTION RULES

MEMBERSHIP

1. An applicant for membership shall pay an annual subscription (£3 - effective from 1/10/2010), payable on 1st January in each year. Any member whose subscription is four months in arrears shall cease to be a member, unless the arrears are paid up. Any person whose membership has ceased, may apply to rejoin on payment of the annual subscription, in such case, membership shall re-commence from the date of payment.
2. When an applicant pays the first subscription on or after the 1st October, the payment shall count as payment for the following year.
3. Members shall be entitled to vote at general meetings, to serve on the Committee, to hold any office, or to nominate any other member for office.
4. Every member, having paid the subscription for the year, shall be entitled to receive the Society's Newsletters, copies of the Agenda and Accounts for the Annual General meeting and due notice of Extraordinary General Meetings.
5. Every member shall observe the common laws relating to the protection of wildlife and shall not disclose any information which may lead to a breach of those laws. In addition, every member shall observe:
 - a) all special conditions which are applicable to Weir Wood reservoir as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
 - b) all regulations and bye-laws imposed by the landowner;
 - c) any other statutory protection measures which may be added in the future.Any member found to be in breach of this rule shall be sent a letter by first class post to his/her last recorded address, stating the nature of the alleged offence and giving the right to the member to make representation concerning the matter to the Committee within 28 days of such notification having been sent. Having considered any such representation, the Committee may, at its discretion, deprive the member of his/her membership.

COMMITTEE & MANAGEMENT OF BUSINESS

6. The business of the Society shall be managed by a Committee, consisting of the Honorary Officers and Committee members, duly elected at the AGM and who shall hold office until the next following AGM. It shall be the duty of the Committee to manage the business of the Society in accordance with the Approved Aims & Objectives.
7. The Honorary officers of the Society shall be the Chairman, Treasurer, General & Minute Secretary, Membership Secretary and Website Editor. The Committee may

appoint other Honorary officers, as required, who, if not already members, shall thereupon become de facto members of the Committee.

8. The Chairman shall preside at all General meetings but if the Chairman is unable to perform this duty, then the Committee shall appoint a Deputy for the meeting.
9. The Secretary shall conduct the official correspondence of the Society and keep proper minutes of all proceedings and records of all official business.
10. The Treasurer shall keep the accounts and shall prepare the Annual Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet to the 31st December in each year. The Treasurer shall produce at the AGM a copy of the audited accounts as at the 31st December of the preceding year, for inspection by members. The Treasurer shall keep a register of the members.
11. An Honorary Auditor shall be appointed at the AGM, being a person who may or may not be a member of the Society but shall not hold any other office nor be a member of the Committee. If the appointed person becomes unable to perform the duties of the office, the Committee may appoint a Deputy to act until the next AGM.
12. The Committee shall have a maximum number of 12 members. The Committee may from time to time appoint additional Committee members to fill any casual vacancies. Any member appointed under this rule shall retire at the next following AGM but shall be eligible for re-election without nomination.

GENERAL MEETINGS

13. The Committee shall summon an AGM of the Society once in every calendar year, giving notice to the membership of time and place and the business to be transacted. All other general meetings shall be called Extraordinary General Meetings. The Committee may convene an EGM, whenever deemed necessary, and one shall be called if requested in writing by at least ten members of the Society. The Committee shall give notice to the membership of all special resolutions, including those for the amendment of rules, for the making of new rules, and for the dissolution of the Society.
14. At any general meeting, 10 members personally present and entitled to vote shall be a quorum, and a resolution shall be decided on a show of hands by a majority of the members present, voting and entitled to vote. In the event of an equal number of votes for and against a resolution, the chairman of the meeting shall have a casting vote and declare whether the resolution has been carried or lost.

ELECTIONS

15. At every AGM the Society shall elect the Honorary Officers and members of the Committee for the ensuing year. If there should be only one candidate for an office, or if the number of eligible candidates for membership of the Committee does not exceed the prescribed maximum, voting shall be by show of hands. If there should be more than one candidate for an office or more than the prescribed maximum of candidates for membership of the Committee, voting shall be by secret ballot in such case.

16. A retiring Honorary Officer or member of the Committee shall be eligible for re-election without nomination. Nomination of candidates shall be made by any two members of the Society, entitled to vote, and may be sent to the Secretary prior to the AGM or announced at the AGM.

AMENDMENT OF RULES

17. No rules, including the Aims and Objectives of the Society, shall be repealed or amended and no new rule made, save by a special resolution passed at a general meeting (i.e. carried on a show of hands by a two-thirds majority of the members present, voting and entitled to vote).

LIMIT ON COMMITTEE AUTHORITY FOR VIREMENT OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

18. Where capital expenditure on any project is insufficiently covered by existing allocated funds, income or grants received, the Committee may, without prior approval of the membership, allocate additional funds by virement from other budgets up to a limit in any one calendar year, which shall be the lesser of £500 or such sum as shall ensure that there remain sufficient reserves to cover all committed and anticipated expenditure. This shall not preclude the Committee from using the same authority in respect of the same project in any subsequent calendar year.

DONATIONS, LEGACIES & GRANTS

19. All monies and benefits in kind, donated or given by bequest, shall be properly accounted for. The Committee shall apply all such monies and benefits in accordance with the wishes of the donors, where specifically expressed, and in promotion of the Aims and Objectives of the Society, save that donations given with subscriptions may be applied, at the discretion of the Committee, to defray the costs of producing and distributing the Newsletters and other running costs.

20. All grants made by governmental bodies, organisations, institutions or companies, shall be properly accounted for. The Committee shall apply such grants in accordance with any specified terms and conditions of the said grants and in promotion of the Aims and Objectives of the Society.

REMUNERATION OF EXPENSES & EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS

21. The Committee may authorise remuneration of out-of-pocket expenses to any officer or member of the Society in return for services rendered to the Society. Where it is deemed appropriate, the Committee may also make an ex-gratia payment to any person who has provided assistance or given unpaid time to the Society.

Where a Committee member has been issued with and signed in order to hold a FOWW Society Debit Card for the payment of approved Society costs, they will be responsible for the safe keeping and control of that card. The Treasurer is responsible

for the administration and ultimate control of all cards operating on the Society accounts. Only a Committee Member can be issued with a card which must be returned on leaving the Committee, or when requested by the Treasurer or The Committee.

Security Note: At the time of every Debit Card transaction over £50 our bank will automatically send a text to the Treasurer, plus he will receive a weekly text detailing all the transactions for that week. Thus the Treasurer will be quickly informed of every card use, and any unauthorised use will be identified and dealt with to protect the funds.

DISSOLUTION

22. If at any general meeting a special resolution for the dissolution of the Society shall be passed by a two-thirds majority of the fully paid-up members of the Society present and voting and that resolution shall be confirmed by secret ballot of the whole membership of the Society, within 6 weeks thereafter, the Committee shall thereupon, or at such future date as shall be specified in such resolution, proceed to discharge the liabilities of the Society. If, after such discharge of liabilities, there remains any monies or assets whatsoever, the same shall be given or transferred to a Local Sussex Wildlife group such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust or Sussex Ornithological Society to be agreed by the members at that time. If effect cannot be given to the aforesaid provision then the said monies and assets shall be given instead to some non-governmental body, the objects of which are to protect wildlife, within the same local Sussex area as currently designated in the year 2006.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

ORIGINAL: 4th May 2007 - Aims & Objectives - Were an amalgamation of some earlier documents from 1997. Rule 8 objective was amended May 2007.

Amendment 1: 22nd April 2010 - Constitution amendment to Rule 1 - Membership subscription increase to £3.

Amendment 2: 4th April 2014 - Aims & Objectives amendments New item 12 - Recognising the role of the website.

Aims & Objectives “Furtherance” amendment changes: Item 3 - Committee representations are widened. Item 7 - Scope widened to include our Open Days. Item 8 - Added the required provision of liability cover which should include any necessary insurances. Item 10 - Widened the scope of our wildlife recording for the site.

Amendment 3: 8th April 2016 - Constitution amendment to Rule 7 - Honorary Officers List Descriptions amended. Two new positions recognised, Membership Secretary & Website Editor, Secretary redefined into General & Minute Secretary.

Amendment 4: 7th April 2017 – Constitution amendment to Rule 7 – Honorary Officers list. Description change so Membership Secretary & Website Editor roles are recognised as separate electable posts.

Amendment 5: Committee agreed June 2018 – Constitution amendment to Rule 21 – Remuneration of Expenses & Ex-gratia Payments. Addition of the rules governing the use of FOWW Society Debit Cards issued to Committee Members.

Amendment 6: Committee agreed September 2018 – Constitution amendment to Rule 21 – Amendment of the “Security Note” detailing how our Bank will inform us of any Debit Card transactions on our account.-

Final: **Amendment 6 - AGM accepted 29th March 2019**