



SAGAS Constitution

1. TITLE

The organisation shall be called “Southern Area Group of Astronomical Societies” (SAGAS).

2. DEFINITIONS

- a. Society: a society that is a paid up member of SAGAS
- b. Member: a person that is a paid up member of a Society
- c. Delegate: a Member appointed by a Society as its representative to SAGAS.
- d. AGM: Annual General Meeting

3. AIM

- 3.1. The aim of SAGAS is to foster and promote the interests of Societies and Members and to promote their interests to the wider public.
- 3.2. SAGAS will provide a shared forum for Societies and Members to meet and network, share successes and good practise and advertise forthcoming events within SAGAS.

4. OBJECTIVES

SAGAS will:

- (a) Act as a central point of contact, reference and forum for astronomical societies in the South of England area.
- (b) encourage liaison and shared good practise between all astronomical societies, whether they are Societies of SAGAS or not, in part by maintaining a website for the purpose,
- (c) promote and encourage all aspects of astronomy for all levels,
- (d) provide opportunities for learning and the exchange of information between Societies and Members via meetings and events,
- (e) lobby locally and nationally on behalf of Societies.

5. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of SAGAS is open to each sole and distinctive non-commercial organisation, association, group, club etc in the SAGAS area which has as its aim to promote astronomy and is set up as a democratic body with at least annual elections electing a management committee/council with appropriately audited accounts.

6. APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP



6.1. Applications for membership of SAGAS shall be made in writing to the Secretary or Chairman or Treasurer of SAGAS. Applications must be signed by an officer of the applicant society.

6.2. Acceptance or rejection of an application shall be determined by a majority vote of Members present at the next Ordinary Meeting or AGM of SAGAS.

6.3. Every Society shall, on acceptance to SAGAS membership, be expected to comply with this Constitution.

7. SUBSCRIPTIONS

Societies shall pay an annual subscription to SAGAS, the amount to be determined at the AGM. Subject to such payment each Society shall be entitled to the full benefits of SAGAS including voting rights. (See section 19)

8. PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

The first subscription of a Society shall become due to be paid to the Treasurer on receipt of a notice of acceptance to SAGAS membership. All subsequent annual subscriptions shall become due on 1st April and shall be paid by the end of July that year. The SAGAS committee (Committee) may determine amounts due for Societies joining SAGAS partway through the subscription year.

9. NON-PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Committee may recommend to Societies the suspension or termination of any Society whose subscription remains unpaid after 1st August.

10. MANAGEMENT

10.1. SAGAS shall be managed by a Committee consisting of a Chairman, a Treasurer, a Secretary and up to five other committee members, all of the Committee being Members of Societies.

10.2

The Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary should where possible each be a Member of a different Society. The Chairman will serve for one year.

Chairman may only continue to hold the post for a further year if (1) the current Chairman is willing to stand for a further year, (2) if SAGAS Societies wish that current Chairman to continue in the post for a further year and (3) any other person(s) nominated for election to hold the post of Chairman for that year are willing to remove their candidacy. All three conditions (above) must be met.

10.3 The Committee may fill any vacancies on the Committee by co-opting Members to fill in until the next AGM. The quorum at Committee meetings shall be a majority of the Committee members and must include two out of Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman.

10.4 No Society, Delegate or Member shall enter into any contract or incur any liability on behalf of SAGAS without permission of the Committee and the Societies.

11 MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Secretary will call the first Committee meeting as soon as possible after the AGM and before the next Ordinary Meeting and subsequently as required by the Committee.

12 ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee's role is to:

- (a) decide any question arising out of this Constitution and deal with all matters connected with SAGAS (except those which can only be dealt with by SAGAS at either an Ordinary Meeting or AGM) and to publish details of those dealings as appropriate.
- (b) agree roles of each Committee member .
- (c) delegate any of its roles (except that of the Chairman and Treasurer)
- (d) set the amount of charge levied on visitors and non-Societies.

FINANCE

13 FINANCIAL YEAR

SAGAS's financial year is from April to March. The Treasurer will present audited accounts at each AGM.

14 BANK ACCOUNT

SAGAS shall operate a bank account from which no funds shall be withdrawn without the authority of any two of the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.

15 EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS

- 15.3 The funds of SAGAS shall be applied solely to the stated objectives of SAGAS.
- 15.4 No Society, Member, Delegate or Committee member shall receive payment directly or indirectly for services to SAGAS other than for proper costs authorised by the Committee in purchasing items or defraying other costs for SAGAS.
- 15.5 Any Committee members with a pecuniary interest must declare that interest before any discussion and must absent themselves from any vote. Any profit made by SAGAS shall be re-invested in SAGAS and shall not be distributed to Societies.

MEETINGS

16 ORDINARY MEETING

- 16.3 An Ordinary Meeting is a meeting of Members and Delegates and should be held in January, July and October of each year.
- 16.4 The function of Ordinary Meetings shall be to discharge the aims and objectives of SAGAS.
- (a) Ordinary Meeting will be held quarterly.
- (b) Ordinary Meetings will be chaired by the Chairman or a deputising Committee Society.
- (c) Notice of every Ordinary Meeting, together with its Agenda, shall be sent to each current Society at least six weeks prior to the date fixed for such meetings.
- (d) No business, other than the formal adjournment of the Meeting, shall be transacted at any Ordinary Meeting unless a quorum be present and such quorum shall consist of not less than 20% of the number of Societies.
- 16.5 The July meeting referred to as the SAGAS Summer Meeting should be rotated around various Society venues and take the format of a 'convention' where the hosting society will organise speakers and other astronomical events open to Members and if space permits to non-Members.

17 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

17.1 AGMs will be Ordinary Meetings with the additional function of providing Societies the opportunity to partake in the running of SAGAS by allowing discussion and voting rights on decisions regarding policy, rulings, alterations to this Constitution and expenditure.

17.2 The AGM shall be held during the month of April in each year.

17.3 Members may nominate themselves or another Member for election to the committee posts.

17.4 Nominations must be seconded by a Member from a different Society.

17.5 Nominations submitted in writing to the Secretary from the January meeting through to 6 weeks prior to the AGM will take precedence over nominations by other means.

17.6 Written nominations will be published to Societies promptly.

17.7 Where there are no nominations posted as above, then nominations can be taken from the floor at the AGM.

17.8 The Agenda shall include the following items:-

(a) apologies for absence.

(b) presentation for approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM and of any Extraordinary General Meetings held since the previous AGM.

(c) presentation by the Chairman of a report on SAGAS activities during the previous year.

(d) presentation by the Treasurer for approval of the accounts for the previous Financial Year, which shall have been independently audited and of a recommendation the cost of subscriptions for the following year.

(e) presentation, discussion, and vote on any proposed amendments to the constitution.

(f) elections:

(i) a new Committee

(ii) a person who shall audit the accounts of SAGAS and who shall be neither a member of the new nor of the retiring Committee

(iii) a representative to the Council of the Federation of Astronomical Societies.

(g) any other AGM business.

- 17.9 Motions to be considered at the AGM should be submitted, in writing, to the committee at least two months prior to the AGM and thence distributed to the Societies at least six weeks prior to the AGM.

18 EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS

An Extraordinary General Meeting of SAGAS may be held at any time at the discretion of the Committee or shall be held within eight weeks after the receipt by the Secretary of a request in writing to that effect, called for by at least 70% of member Societies. Every such request shall specify the business for which the meeting is to be convened and no other business shall be transacted.

19 RESOLUTIONS AT GENERAL MEETINGS

19.1 Resolutions, including elections, shall be by a ballot (a show of voting cards). Unless otherwise provided by this Constitution all resolutions brought forward at an Ordinary Meeting shall be decided by a bare majority of the votes properly recorded at such meeting and in the case of equality of votes, the resolution shall be deemed not to have been passed. If at any Ordinary Meeting there were any dispute as to the interpretation of this Constitution then the decision of the Committee shall be final.

19.2 Only one Member may be nominated as a Delegate to represent their Society and vote on its behalf. However, if a Society cannot provide a delegate, that society may cast a postal/e-mail vote on any agenda item which requires a vote. This must be received by the Secretary in advance of the meeting. The Secretary shall not divulge the voting decision of any member society contained in an e-mail in advance of the meeting where the vote is called.

In the event of there not being sufficient members present at the AGM to form a quorum, the number of postal/e-mail votes that have been cast will be included in the attendance count to establish a quorum.

20 CODE OF CONDUCT

20.1 Societies and Members are expected to treat each other with respect and courtesy in meetings and in other forms of communication.

20.2 Any Society or Member that acts in a way which brings SAGAS into disrepute may be liable to disciplinary action. Such acts may include (but not exhaustively) abusive language or behaviour, misrepresentation, disruptive behaviour, breach of privacy or theft.

20.3 Any Society concerned that another Member or Society may have brought SAGAS into disrepute should bring this matter to the attention of the Committee in writing.

20.4 The Committee will put such allegations to the relevant party and seek clarification of the facts.

20.5 The facts of the matter will be put to the Societies at the next Ordinary Meeting or AGM and the Societies shall decide on any appropriate disciplinary action taken by a simple majority vote.

This may range from:

- No action
- Written warning from the Committee on behalf of the Societies
- Requesting the relevant Society to provide another Delegate
- Excluding a Member from SAGAS events
- Temporary suspension of attendance at SAGAS events
- Expulsion of the offending Society

20.6 The decision of the Societies at the meeting on such matters is final.

20.7 Expelled Societies may reapply to SAGAS as per Section 6 of this Constitution.

21 DISSOLUTION OF SAGAS

21.2 SAGAS shall only be dissolved by resolution passed by a majority of at least 70% of the Societies present and voting at an Extraordinary General Meeting called for the purpose of considering such dissolution.

21.3 In the event of dissolution any balance of cash remaining in hand after the realisation of assets and payment of debts shall not be distributed among Societies but shall be donated to an association with similar aims such as the Federation of Astronomical Societies or one of its regional groups.

22 ALTERATIONS TO CONSTITUTION

No alteration to this Constitution shall be made except at any AGM or Ordinary Meeting in which the proposed alteration is included on the Agenda and the resolution embodying the same is carried by a majority of 75% of the votes recorded thereon at the meeting.

