

Coventry Family History Society Constitution - Issue 3 - October 2018



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1. Name

The Society will be known as ‘The Coventry Family History Society’ which may be abbreviated to the **CFHS**. In this document all references to the ‘Society’ shall be taken to mean the Coventry Family History Society.

2. Object

The object of the Society is to promote and encourage the study of family history, genealogy and local history in relation to the City of Coventry and its environs.

3. Powers

In furtherance of the object but not otherwise the Committee may exercise the following powers:-

- a) To hold regular meetings, lectures and discussions and organise visits for the Society members and interested members of the public;
- b) To hold and maintain a library of printed and other works for the use of Society members and if practicable to extend this to interested members of the public;
- c) To help preserve source material and transcribe and publish such material including documents and monumental inscriptions;
- d) To pursue collaborative actions with supportive bodies;
- e) The Society is a member of the Federation of Family History Societies (Registered Charity No. 1038721) and shall have the power to guarantee the Federation debts in the event of its insolvency up to the sum of £1. The Society may also affiliate with other charitable organisations whose objects are deemed compatible and mutual supportive.

4. Membership

4.1 Class of Membership

Membership will be open to individuals, couples, families and groups whose interests coincide with the object of the Society; only those members age 18 and over will be entitled to vote at meetings. At the discretion of the Chairman and the Committee, the Society may invite a small number of people to become honorary members

4.2 Period of Membership

The period of membership shall be for one calendar year commencing on January 1st, excepting that when membership is taken out on or after October 1st in any year then an option will be given to extend that membership to December 31st of the following year.

4.3 Subscription Rates

Subscription Rates will be reviewed annually by the Committee and submitted to the A.G.M. for ratification.

4.4 Renewal of Membership

Subscriptions will become due on January 1st each year. Any member in arrears with their subscriptions at January 31st will not be entitled to receive a Journal, nor to have voting rights or any other benefits of membership. Any person who has not renewed their membership by March 31st will be deemed to have lapsed their membership.

4.5 Records of Membership / Attending Meetings

The Membership Secretary will keep an up to date list of members. This list will include the class of membership and the date of last subscription payment. Upon receipt of payment of subscription the Membership Secretary will issue a unique numbered membership card.

4.6 Attending the Society's Meetings

Members may be requested to show their card at any meetings of the Society, and may be requested to make a donation to cover room and refreshment costs.

At the discretion of the Committee, members of the public may be admitted to meetings of the Society and a donation be requested to cover room and refreshment costs.

4.7 Expulsion of Members

Should any member bring the Society's name into disrepute by their actions in activities related to the object of the Society then a proposal may be put before the Committee for that member's expulsion from the Society. The complaint regarding the member must be put in writing to the member, who will then be given 14 days in which to respond. After any response from the member, or if no response is forthcoming, the Committee will decide expulsion by a simple vote. The member shall have the right to appeal to the full membership of the Society.

5. Storage and Disclosure of Members' Details

5.1 Storage

Member's details, including name, address, class of membership, payment date of subscription and the names they are researching-will be held on a computer database. In order to comply with the General Data Protection Act members will be given the opportunity to object, in which case their details will be removed from the database and processed manually. The Society will conform to its 'Code of Practice' for the operation of the database stored on a 'stand-alone' computer.

5.2 Disclosure

Information supplied by members will be used only by the Society and then only for the purpose of the Society. However, lists of members' interests will be published together with the names/addresses of members, (or e-mail addresses), should the request be made by that member.

6.0 Executive Officers of the Society

6.1 Definition

The Society will have six Executive Officers as follows:-

Chairman
Vice Chairman
General Secretary
Treasurer
Membership Secretary
Journal Editor

6.2 Election of Officers.

All Officer Positions may be elected by a simple majority at an A.G.M. or the next Committee Meeting of the Society. Any person elected to fill a casual vacancy (a vacancy brought about by an Officer retiring or otherwise vacating office part way through a term) will be deemed to have been elected for the remainder of the period until the next A.G.M. Officers, on the agreement of the Committee, may hold more than one post.

Any casual vacancy arising between A.G.M.s may be filled at the discretion of the Committee. Any person so appointed will have the full rights and authority applicable to that office. If they are to continue in office after the next A.G.M. following their appointment then they must submit themselves for election at that A.G.M.

6.3 Retirement of Officers.

Retiring Officers will be recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting. No Officer will remain in post for more than three years without offering themselves for re-election at the A.G.M.

7. The Committee.

7.1 Composition of the Committee.

The Committee shall consist of the Executive Officers of the Society and no fewer than two and no more than eight Ordinary Committee Members.

7.2 Election of Ordinary Committee Members.

Ordinary Committee Members shall be elected by a simple majority at an A.G.M. of the Society for a period of one year or until the next A.G.M. following their election, when they will be eligible for re-election.

Casual vacancies arising between A.G.M.s may be filled at the discretion of the Committee for the remainder of the period until the next A.G.M. Where, at the previous A.G.M. there has been a contest for membership of the Committee then due consideration must be given to any candidates who received a reasonable number of votes at that A.G.M.

When there is to be a contest for membership of the Committee at an A.G.M. the membership will be advised which of the candidates have expressed a willingness to carry out the duties of a non-executive officer.

7.3 Appointment of Non-Executive Officers.

The Committee may appoint any number of people to carry out functions for and on behalf of Society and may invite these people to attend Committee meetings. Any such appointments will not carry voting rights. This type of appointment should normally be made at the Committee meeting following the A.G.M. and will remain current until the Committee meeting following the next A.G.M. or as the Committee may decide otherwise.

Details of people appointed as Non-Executive Officers will be listed in each journal together with details of Executive Officers and ordinary Committee Members.

8. Committee Meetings.

8.1 Arrangement for Meetings.

The arrangements for and conduct at Committee meetings is set out in a document entitled 'Code of Practice for Committee Meetings'.

The Committee will meet a minimum of six times a year.

8.2 Sub-Committee Meetings.

The above code of practice allows for the authorisation and control of Sub-Committees, Project Groups and Working Parties provided that all acts and proceedings of such groups shall be fully and promptly reported to the Committee.

8.3 Executive Officer Meetings.

The above code of practice also covers meetings of the Executive Officers.

9. Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings.

9.1 Timing of an A.G.M.

The General Secretary will call an A.G.M. each year the date of which will be set by the Committee, providing that an A.G.M. will be held within 14 months of the previous A.G.M.

9.2 Business of an A.G.M.

The following business will be transacted at an A.G.M.:-

- a) Reports from the Chairman and Officers of the Society.
- b) Report of Accounts for the previous financial year.
- c) Election of Officers and Committee Members.
- d) Review and fix subscription rates for the following year.
- e) Election of an Independent Examiner.
- f) Consideration of resolutions from members of the Society.
- g) Any other business as determined by the Committee.

9.3 Special General Meetings.

A S.G.M. may be called at any time by resolution of the Committee or by a request from members.

Any such request from members must set out the resolution (s) proposed, be signed by one-tenth of the membership and be received by the General Secretary of the Society a minimum of 21 days prior to the date of the proposed meeting.

Business proper to be conducted at a S.G.M. may include the following:-

- a) Removal of any or all Officers and Committee Members.
- b) The filling of any vacancies resulting from 1. Above.
- c) Alteration to the Constitution of the Society.
- d) Any urgent or important issue affecting the object of the Society
- e) Dissolution of the Society.

Only resolutions circulated in advance may be taken at a S.G.M; but see also 9.6 paragraph 2.

9.4 Notification of Annual & Special General Meetings

The General Secretary will notify each member of the Society (joint and group members will receive one notification only) in writing of the date and place of the meeting and shall include details of any resolutions to be put before the meeting together with postal voting and nominee registration forms. A minimum of 21 days' notice will be given of the date of the meeting.

9.5 Attendance and Voting at Annual & Special General Meetings

- a) Honorary members may attend A.G.M.s and S.G.M.s and may speak but will not have voting rights.
- b) Resolutions shall be passed by a simple majority of votes cast by those entitled to vote. See clause 4. Membership.
- c) Each individual member and each party to a joint membership shall be entitled to one vote on each resolution.
- d) A group membership shall be entitled to a single vote on each resolution.
- e) Postal and nominee voting will be allowed and instructions will be sent out with the notice of the meeting. Only fully paid up members may act as nominees.

9.6 Nominations and Resolutions

Nominations for Officers and Committee Members should be made in writing to the General Secretary to be received in adequate time for them to be notified to the membership before the meeting. Such nominations should be signed by a) the proposer, b) the seconder, and c) the nominee showing their willingness to stand.

Exceptionally and at the total discretion of the Chairman of the meeting, nominations and resolutions may be taken from the floor. Any resolution taken from the floor must be proposed and seconded by qualifying members in person. No resolution shall be taken from the floor which includes a proposal that the Society be dissolved.

10. Accounting

10.1 Finance

The financial year of the Society will end on June 30th each year. The Treasurer will prepare a balance sheet for the year end in time for it to be distributed to members with the notice of the A.G.M. The Treasurer will maintain accounts for all money both received and expended by the Society for whatever reason and will report as required by the Committee. Other persons dealing with money for and on behalf of the Society will render to the Treasurer properly receipted accounts to the satisfaction of the Treasurer in accordance with any relevant 'Code of Practice'.

The Treasurer will operate banking arrangements as agreed from time to time by the Committee. All cheques or other instruments drawn on the Society's bank account and any direction to the Society's bankers shall require the signature of two people nominated by the Committee for that purpose. No expenditure may be undertaken or committed to on behalf of the Society unless it supports the object of the Society and has financial concurrence of the Treasurer.

An Independent Examiner will be elected at the A.G.M. and the Treasurer will make the Society's books available to the examiner at a mutually agreed time in order that properly certified accounts are presented to the A.G.M.

10.2 Stocks and Assets

Return of stocks held for re-sale, goods held on 'sale or return' and assets owned by the Society shall be submitted to the Treasurer by the responsible Officers for inclusion in the year end accounts. Stock held for re-sale should be accounted at cost price and assets should be accounted as a diminishing fund on a basis agreed by the Treasurer.

Stocks, goods and assets so held must be made available for physical inspection, as required by the Independent Examiner.

11. Terms of Reference and Codes of Practice

All Officers, Committee, Sub-Committees, project groups and working parties of the Society will act in accordance with this Constitution and will also have 'Terms of Reference' and 'Codes of Practice' as necessary to clarify and control their activities

All such 'Terms of Reference' and 'Codes of Practice' will be submitted to the main Committee of the Society for approval and all such documents, as approved, will be filed with the General Secretary, as will reports and approved minutes of Committee, Sub-Committee and Executive Officer meetings. Copies of all such documents filed with the General Secretary will be available for perusal at appropriate meetings of the Society.

12. Indemnity

The Officers and members of the Committee shall not be liable, other than as an ordinary member, for any loss suffered by the Society as a result of discharge of their duties except where such a loss arises from their recklessness, wilful negligence or dishonesty.

They shall be entitled to an indemnity out of assets of the Society for all expenses and other liabilities incurred by them in the proper discharge of their duties except where such an expense arises from their recklessness, wilful negligence or dishonesty.

13. Dissolution

If the Committee decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Society it shall call a meeting of all members of the Society of which not less than 21 days' notice (stating the terms of the Special General Meeting resolution to be proposed) shall be given. If the proposal is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting the Committee shall have the power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the Society. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Society; as the members of the Society may determine or failing that shall be applied for some other charitable purpose. A copy of the statement for the final accounting period of the Society must be sent to the Charity Commissioners.

14 Amendments to the Constitution of the Society

14.1 Subject to the following provisions of this clause the Constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting at a meeting. The notice of the meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.

14.2 No amendments may be made to Clause 1, clause 2, clause 13 or this clause 14 without prior consent of the Charity Commissioners.

14.3 No amendment may be made which would have the effect of making the Society cease to be a charity at law.

14.4 The Committee should promptly send to the Charity Commissioners a copy of any amendment made under this clause.

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