

Constitution of the Mid-Cheshire Astronomical Group

(Version 4 as amended January 2024)

NAME

1. The Group shall be called The Mid-Cheshire Astronomical Group hereafter called the Group or MCAG.

OBJECTIVES

2. The objectives of the Group are:
 - (i) To aid and encourage amateur astronomy in the North West of England and further areas
 - (ii) To promote social intercourse between its members and those of other Societies
 - (iii) To promote the education of students and members of the general public in the subject of astronomy
3. These objectives are to be achieved by holding open meetings, on-line meetings, exhibitions of astronomical interest, presentations to students and members of the general public when requested, and observation sessions.

MEMBERSHIP

4. Membership of the Group is open to all who are interested in astronomy.
5. The Group will operate with the following forms of membership:
 - (i) Full – 16 years of age and older.
 - (ii) Junior – Under 16 years of age.
6. Junior members under 16 years of age require parental consent to take part in observation activities and outings. Junior members are required to be accompanied by a parent or guardian at MCAG meetings and events.
7. The annual subscription for each form of membership will be determined by the membership at the Annual General Meeting held in January. Renewal of membership falls due on 1st April each year.
8. Membership and guests conduct. If a member or guest behaves in a way to bring the Group into disrepute, they will be asked to leave the Group and if a member, membership will be terminated. This includes but is not limited to:
 - (i) Contravening or acting outside the spirit of this constitution.
 - (ii) Disrupting MCAG meetings or harassing other members.
 - (iii) Breaching a condition of MCAG membership.
 - (iv) Hampering the MCAG pursuit of its Objectives as set out above.
 - (v) Bringing the study of astronomy or its promotion into disrepute or

- (vi) Bringing MCAG into disrepute with its members, the general public, other organisations or official bodies.

MANAGEMENT OF THE GROUP

9. The management of the Group shall be entrusted to a Committee hereafter known as the Committee.
10. The Committee shall consist of the following:
Chair Person – Secretary – Treasurer – Social Media Officer.
11. Officers and Members of the Committee shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. The elected Committee shall have the power to co-opt members during the year to assist in specific tasks.
12. Responsibilities of Officers:
 - The Chair Person will chair all meetings of the Group. He/She shall represent the Group on all official occasions. In the absence of the Chair, one of the other officers will chair meetings.
 - The Secretary will convene meetings of the Group and record minutes of all such meetings. The Secretary will attend to all correspondence of the Group, including booking visiting speakers, and circulate any relevant material to all members.
 - The Treasurer will keep all funds of the Group in an account at such a Bank as may be decided by the Committee. The Treasurer will receive all monies payable to the Group and produce accounts regarding the Group's financial standing at the Annual General Meeting.
 - The Social Media Officer will be responsible for all matters relating to the Press and media and for publicising the Group and its functions. He/She will be responsible for all aspects of social media engagement including Facebook, X (Twitter) and other services as required.
13. The Committee shall ensure that fair and accurate minutes of their meetings be kept, as well as their financial transactions on behalf of the Group. Minutes of Committee meetings shall be made available for inspection at the request of any member of the Group.

MEETINGS

14. The Secretary will give at least 2 weeks' notice in writing to every member of the Group, of the time and place and provide an agenda for all General Meetings.
15. Times and venues for observation sessions and other Group activities will be arranged on an adhoc basis.
16. The Annual General Meeting of the Group will be held in January of each year to receive reports from Officers of the Group and to discuss any business of which due notice shall be given.
17. A quorum for a General Meeting shall constitute one quarter of the paid membership.

APPLICATION OF MONIES, ACCOUNTS AND AUDITS

18. In order to cover unforeseen expenses, a sum of £100.00 must be kept in reserve. This is for emergency use only.
19. The Committee shall agree a planned budget of expenditure for the Group to include future development and ongoing projects of the Group.
20. No money or property of the Group or gain arising from carrying on of the Group shall be applied otherwise than for the benefit of the Group as a whole or for some charitable or benevolent purpose, or purposes chosen by resolution of a General Meeting.
21. Full accounts of the financial affairs of the Group shall be maintained by the Treasurer. A copy of the annual accounts for the Group year ending 31 December shall be made available to members at the Annual General Meeting.
22. Cheques on behalf of the Group must be signed by two officers of the Committee.
23. The financial affairs of the Group shall be inspected by a member of the Group who will make a report to the Annual General Meeting.

EQUIPMENT

24. All equipment, books, data acquired by the Group shall remain the property of the Mid-Cheshire Astronomical Group.
25. Members will take full responsibility for equipment borrowed and in making good any damage whilst in the borrower's possession. Any member borrowing a piece of equipment MUST return the item at the request of any Committee member.
26. If equipment has not been used by members, over the last 18 months, the Committee has the right to dispose of the asset, and any financial gain be admitted to Group funds. The Committee will offer the items to MCAG members first for a fair price. If no member wishes to buy the item, it will be advertised and sold publicly. All disposals must be minuted in Committee meeting records and a receipt given to the Treasurer.

DISSOLUTION

27. The Group may be dissolved by resolution passed at the Annual General Meeting or any Extraordinary General Meeting provided that:
 - (i) At least one months notice in writing of the proposal to dissolve the Group has been given to the Secretary and to every member, and
 - (ii) At least two-thirds of the members vote in favour of the proposal for which proxy and postal votes would be accepted.
28. After discharging all liabilities the remaining assets of the Group will be donated to other charitable astronomical societies.

ALTERATION OF THE RULES

29. No Rule shall be altered, rescinded, or introduced, except by resolution at an Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting. There is required to be at least one quarter of the paid membership to be present, and to vote in favour of the proposed changes. An agenda must be sent before such a meeting is held, with no less than two weeks notice in writing.