

The Constitution of Edinburgh Secular Society

As revised and adopted at the AGM on 29 September 2013
but with clauses 4biii and 5c revised and approved at the AGM on 27 April 2014
and clauses 4b, 4g and 4h amended at the EGM on 27 July 2014

1. Name
 - a The Society is to be called 'Edinburgh Secular Society' or 'ESS' (herein 'the Society').
2. Aims
 - a The Society exists to challenge religious privilege in the public domain.
 - b The Society exists to support and further the cause of secularism in Scotland and the United Kingdom.
 - c The Society will take part in events to provide educational activities for citizens in Scotland.
 - d The Society supports the work of the National Secular Society (herein 'NSS').
 - e The Society will seek to maintain affiliation with the NSS.
 - f The Society supports the Secular Charter of the NSS as policy.
3. Powers
 - a The Society will have the power to challenge religious privilege in the public domain.
 - b The Society will have the power to campaign on secular issues.
 - c The Society will have the power to organise events to promote secularism.
 - d The Society may affiliate to any body with similar aims and objectives.
 - e The Society may not affiliate to or publicly support any political party.
 - f The Society will have the power to raise and spend funds to promote the Aims of the Society.
4. Board
 - a A Board ('the Board') will manage the Society and ensure that it pursues the Society's Aims.
 - b The Board is to consist of up to nine elected members, consisting at least of the following Officers:
 - i The Chair, who will act as chief executive and Chair of the Board and be the main contact with the NSS. Unless otherwise delegated, the Chair will chair Ordinary Meetings and an AGM or EGM. The Chair will be the main contact with the NSS.
 - ii The Vice-chair, who will assist and/or deputise for the Chair.
 - iii The Communications Officer, who will act as the press and communications officer and be responsible for all publicity. All media matters will be overseen by the Communications Officer and members will not be permitted to communicate on behalf of the Society without written permission from the Communications Officer. The Communications Officer will be responsible for producing and publishing literature and other materials to represent and promote the Society's aims.
 - iv The Secretary, who will act as chief administrative officer and service all Board and general meetings. It will be the responsibility of the Secretary to maintain a list of members of the Society.

- v The Treasurer, who will act as the chief financial officer and be responsible for ensuring that the Society fulfils its financial requirements and for keeping the accounts of the Society.
- vi The Education Officer, who will be responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the Society's Education Policy.
- c The Board may, at its discretion, and by simple majority vote, designate an individual member as 'Honorary President of Edinburgh Secular Society'. The Honorary President will be an ex officio member of the Board and will be entitled to use the style 'Honorary President of Edinburgh Secular Society'. The Honorary President will serve as such until and unless: he or she ceases to be a member of the Society; the Board decides by simple majority vote or the member chooses to resign from the position. In the last event, the Board may allow the member to use the title 'Honorary President Emeritus'.
- d The term of the Board is one year.
- e All Officers will be automatically nominated for re-election at an AGM or EGM.
- f Election to the Board requires a simple majority vote of all Members and Officers present at an AGM or EGM.
- g Members may nominate themselves or any other member for a position on the Board at an AGM or EGM. Such nomination must be seconded by another member present.
- h In the event that an Officer resigns, that person may remain a member of the Board until the next AGM. In the event of any vacancy arising in the Board, the Board shall have the power to co-opt a member of the Society to fill such vacancy for the period up to the next AGM.
- i The Board will meet at least six times per year and the Secretary shall give the Officers at least a fortnight's notice of forthcoming Board meetings.
- j The Board will be in quorum when at least three Officers are present.
- k The Board will have the power to nominate a representative to attend events on behalf of the Society.

5. Members and Supporters

- a Anyone who takes part in the Society's activities, or who signs up to one of the Society's lists (on-line or in hard-copy), shall be defined as a 'Supporter' of the Society. Anyone who has paid the Society's membership fee shall be defined as a 'Member' of the Society.
- b Members must be at least 16 years of age.
- c Anyone who wishes to become a Member of the Society must submit a completed application form with the appropriate membership fee to the Treasurer. Alternatively, they can complete our Standing Order Form (downloaded from our website) and send it to the Treasurer or make an electronic funds transfer to our bank account, so advising the Treasurer.
- d The Board may, at its discretion, refuse to accept an application for membership.
- e A successful application for membership will not become effective until payment for the appropriate annual membership subscription has been received.
- f Only those Members who have paid their current subscription are entitled to take part in and vote at any Ordinary Members Meeting, an AGM or an EGM.
- g Any Member may submit a motion to an AGM or an EGM.
- h A motion must be submitted in writing (hard copy or email) signed by the Member, to the Secretary at least four weeks before the date of an AGM or an EGM.

- i Members will be entitled to one vote at all meetings but may appoint a proxy to attend and vote in their place.
- j The Membership year runs from 1 January until 31 December.
- k If a person becomes a member on or after 1 September their membership will run until 31 December the following year.
- l The Society will safeguard the confidentiality of a Members personal data.
- m The Society retains the right to refuse or withdraw membership from any member who fails to support its constitution or the Secular Charter of the National Secular Society or who brings the Society or the NSS into disrepute.
- n Membership may be withdrawn following investigation by an Officer of a complaint to the Board and the complaint is upheld.

6. Meetings

- a The Society's Annual General Meeting ('the AGM') will be held in April each year.
 - i The AGM will receive the annual report and accounts from the Board for the period ending 31 March of the same year as the on any motions submitted or on any policy or constitutional items requiring ratification.
 - ii The Secretary will give all members at least 8-weeks' notice of the AGM and must receive any motions (by hard copy or email) no less than 4-weeks before the AGM. The motions received will be issued to members at least two weeks before the AGM.
- b Ordinary General Meetings will discuss the policies and campaigns of the Society, notice being given by the Secretary. The Chair may permit any person to attend as an observer and may allow that person to speak.
- c An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be convened by the Board or at the request of one third of the members. An EGM has the same powers as an AGM.

7. Finance

- a. Members will be required to pay a non-refundable membership fee agreed at an AGM on a proposal made by the Treasurer.
- b. The Society may hold events explicitly for the purpose of raising funds, either for the Society or an appropriate cause supporting the Aims of the Society.
- c. The Society may solicit donations; either for the Society or an appropriate cause supporting the Aims of the Society.
- d. The income and property of the Society shall be devoted to the promotion of the Aims of the Society.
- e. Any bank accounts opened for the Society will be in the name of the Society with three Officers being signatories to the account. Any cheques issued must be signed by two of the signatories.
- f. The Treasurer may reimburse any Officer for expenses incurred on Society business.
- g. The Society is a not-for-profit organisation.

8. Complaints Procedure

- a. A complaint from any member of the Society about the actions of the Society or an individual member should be made in writing to the Chair.
- b. Where the complaint concerns the Chair, it should be made to the Vice-chair.

- c. Where the complaint concerns an Officer or the Honorary President, the Chair or Vice-chair may suspend that Officer from their position on the Board pending the outcome of an investigation.
- d. The Chair, or any other appropriate Officer, shall respond in writing (letter or email) to the complainant within 25 working days.
- e. If the complaints are in relation to the conduct of a Member, an appropriate Officer will be asked to investigate and report to the Board within 25 working days.
- f. The complainant will be named in the report.
- g. The Board may decide (by simple majority vote) to take one of the following actions:
 - i. Take no further action;
 - ii. Issue a warning and take appropriate corrective action;
 - iii. Dismiss the member from the Society.

9. Alterations to Constitution

Alterations to the constitution must be submitted to an AGM or EGM in the form of a motion.

10. Dissolution

- a. The Society may be dissolved by a majority vote of two-thirds present at an AGM or an EGM.
- b. In the event of the Society being dissolved, all remaining funds after payment of debts shall go to the NSS.