

THE BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
(Registered Charity No 249877)

RULES

Adopted at the BOU's Annual General Meeting on 7 April 2010.

Amended by BOU Council 9 November 2010

Approved by Charity Commission 25 February 2011

Amended by BOU Council 12 March 2014

Amended by BOU Council 11 July 2018

PART 1

1. Adoption of the Rules

The association and its property will be administered and managed in accordance with the provisions in Parts 1 and 2 of these Rules.

These Rules replace any previous Rules.

2. The Name

The association's name is –

THE BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

3. The Objects

The Charity's objects (the Objects) are –

the advancement of the science of ornithology.

4. Application of the Income and Property

- (1) The income and property of the Charity shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the Objects.
- (2) A Trustee may pay out of, or be reimbursed from, the property of the Charity reasonable expenses properly incurred by him or her when acting on behalf of the Charity.
- (3) None of the income or property of the Charity may be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend bonus or otherwise by way of profit to any member of the Charity. This does not prevent;
 - (a) a member who is not a Trustee from receiving reasonable and proper remuneration for any goods or services supplied to the Charity;
 - (b) a Trustee from:

- i. buying goods or services from the Charity upon the same terms as other members of the public;
 - ii. receiving benefit from the Charity in the capacity of a beneficiary of the Charity, provided that the Trustees comply with the provisions of sub clause (5) of this clause, or as a member of the Charity and upon the same terms as other members;
- (c) the purchase of indemnity insurance for the Trustees against liability that by virtue of any rule of law would otherwise attach to a Trustee or other officer in respect of any negligence, default breach of duty or breach of trust of which he or she may be guilty in relation to the Charity but excluding:
- i. fines;
 - ii. costs of unsuccessfully defending criminal prosecutions for offences arising out of the fraud, dishonesty or wilful or reckless misconduct of the Trustee or other officer;
 - iii. liabilities to the Charity that result from conduct that the Trustee or other officer knew or ought to have known was not in the best interests of the Charity or in respect of which the person concerned did not care whether that conduct was in the best interests of the Charity or not.
- (4) No Trustee may be paid or receive any other benefit for being a Trustee.
- (5) (a) If it is proposed that a Trustee should receive a benefit from the Charity that is not already permitted under sub-clause (3) of this clause, he or she must:
- i. declare his or her interest in the proposal;
 - ii. be absent from that part of any meeting at which the proposal is discussed and take no part in any discussion of it;
 - iii. not be counted in determining whether the meeting is quorate;
 - iv. not vote on the proposal.
- (b) If the Trustees fail to follow this procedure, the resolution to confer a benefit upon the Trustee will be void and the Trustee must repay to the Charity the value of any benefit received by the Trustee from the Charity.

5. Dissolution

- (1) If the members resolve to dissolve the Charity, the Trustees will remain in office as Charity Trustees and be responsible for winding up the affairs of the Charity in accordance with this clause.
- (2) The Trustees must collect in all the assets of the Charity and must pay or make provision for all the liabilities of the Charity.

- (3) The Trustees must apply any remaining property or money:
 - (a) directly for the Objects;
 - (b) by transfer to any Charity or charities for purposes the same as or similar to the Charity;
 - (c) in such other manner as the Charity Commission for England and Wales (“the Commission”) may approve in writing in advance.
 - (d) Nothing in this (constitution) shall authorise an application of the property of the charity for purposes which are not charitable in accordance with section 7 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.
- (4) The members may pass a resolution before or at the same time as the resolution to dissolve the Charity specifying the manner in which the Trustees are to apply the remaining property or assets of the Charity and the Trustees must comply with the resolution if it is consistent with paragraphs (a)–(c) inclusive in sub-clause (3) above.
- (5) In no circumstances shall the net assets of the Charity be paid to or distributed among the members of the Charity (except to a member that is itself a Charity)
- (6) The Trustees must notify the Commission promptly that the Charity has been dissolved. If the Trustees are obliged to send the Charity’s accounts to the Commission for the accounting period which ended before its dissolution, they must send the Commission the Charity’s final accounts

6. Amendments

- (1) The Charity may amend any provision contained in Part 1 of these Rules provided that:
 - (a) no amendment may be made that would have the effect of making the Charity cease to be a Charity at law;
 - (b) no amendment may be made to alter the Objects if the change would not be within the reasonable contemplation of the members of or donors to the Charity;
 - (c) no amendment may be made to clause 4 without the prior written consent of the Commission;
 - (d) any resolution to amend a provision of Part 1 of these Rules is passed by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting at a general meeting.

- (2) Any provision contained in Part 2 of these Rules may be amended, provided that any such amendment is made by resolution passed by a simple majority of the members present and voting at a general meeting.
- (3) A copy of any resolution amending these Rules shall be sent to the Commission within twenty one days of it being passed.

PART 2

7. Membership

- (1) Membership is open to anyone interested in furthering the Objects of the Charity and who are approved by the Trustees on:
 - (a) full payment of an annual subscription as determined from time to time by the Trustees;
 - (b) full payment for Life Membership as determined by the Trustees;
 - (c) appointment as an Honorary Member (of which there will be a maximum of 20 at any time) by the Trustees.
- (2)
 - (a) Applications for membership shall be reported to the next meeting of the Trustees for acceptance.
 - (b) The Trustees may only refuse an application for membership if, acting reasonably and properly, they consider it to be in the best interests of the Charity to refuse the application.
 - (c) The Trustees must inform the applicant in writing of the reasons for the refusal within twenty-one days of the decision.
 - (d) The Trustees must consider any written representations the applicant may make about the decision. The Trustees' decision following any written representations must be notified to the applicant in writing but shall be final.
- (3) Membership is not transferable to anyone else.
- (4) The Trustees must keep a register of names and addresses of the members which must be made available to any member upon request.
 - (a) details of members will be retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
 - (b) details of members will only be provided to other members and permitted third parties in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
 - (c) any member in receipt of other members' details will not share those details with any other party. Failure to comply with this clause may result in the member's membership of the Charity being terminated.
- (5) The membership year runs from January to December each year.

- (6) Membership subscriptions fall due on 1 October prior to the membership year.

8. Termination of Membership

Membership is terminated if:

- (1) the member dies or, if it is an organisation, ceases to exist;
- (2) the member resigns by written notice to the Charity unless, after the resignation, there would be fewer than ten members;
- (3) any sum due from the member to the Charity is not paid in full within six months of it falling due;
- (4) the member is removed from membership by a resolution of the Trustees that it is in the best interests of the Charity that his or her membership is terminated. A resolution to remove a member from membership may only be passed if:
 - (a) the member has been given at least twenty one days notice in writing of the meeting of the Trustees at which the resolution will be proposed and the reasons why it is to be proposed;
 - (b) the member or, at the option of the member, the member's representative (who need not be a member of the Charity) has been allowed to make representations to the meeting.

9. General Meetings

- (1) The Charity must hold a general meeting within 13 months of the date of the adoption of these Rules.
- (2) An annual general meeting must be held in each subsequent year and not more than fifteen months may elapse between successive annual general meetings.
- (3) All general meetings other than annual general meetings shall be called special general meetings.
- (4) The Trustees may call a special general meeting at any time.
- (5) The Trustees must call a special general meeting if requested to do so in writing by at least fifty members. The request must state the nature of the business that is to be discussed. If the Trustees fail to hold the meeting within twenty-eight days of the request, the members may proceed to call a special general meeting but in doing so they must comply with the provisions of these Rules.

10. Notice of General Meetings

- (1) The minimum period of notice required to hold any general meeting of the Charity is twenty one clear days from the date on which the notice is deemed to have been given.
- (2) The notice must specify the date, time and place of the meeting and the general nature of the business to be transacted. If the meeting is to be an annual general meeting, the notice must say so.
- (3) The notice may contain the provision of a fixed date for members to respond to specific items of business contained on the notice and to be conducted at the meeting.
- (4) The notice must be issued to all the members and Trustees.

11. Quorum of General Meetings

- (1) No business shall be transacted at any general meeting unless a quorum is present.
- (2) A quorum is at least three of the Trustees plus at least ten members entitled to vote.
- (3) The authorised representative of a member organisation shall be counted in the quorum.
- (4) If:
 - (a) a quorum is not present within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting; or
 - (b) during a meeting a quorum ceases to be present,the meeting shall be adjourned to such time and place as the Trustees shall determine.
- (5) The Trustees must re-convene the meeting and must give at least seven clear days' notice of the re-convened meeting stating the date time and place of the meeting.
- (6) If no quorum is present at the re-convened meeting within fifteen minutes of the time specified for the start of the meeting the members present at that time shall constitute the quorum for that meeting.

12. Chair of General Meetings

- (1) General meetings shall be chaired by the President.
- (2) In the absence of the President a Trustee nominated by the Trustees shall chair the meeting.

13. Adjournments of General Meetings

- (1) The members present at a meeting may resolve, by a majority vote, that the meeting shall be adjourned.
- (2) The person who is chairing the meeting must decide the date, time and place at which the meeting is to be re-convened unless those details are specified in the resolution.
- (3) No business shall be conducted at an adjourned meeting unless it could properly have been conducted at the meeting had the adjournment not taken place.
- (4) If a meeting is adjourned by a resolution of the members for more than seven days, at least seven clear days' notice shall be given of the re-convened meeting stating the date time and place of the meeting.

14. Procedures and Voting at General Meetings

- (1) Only the business for which a meeting has been convened, as detailed on the notice, will be discussed.
- (2) Each member shall have one vote but if there is an equality of votes the person who is chairing the meeting shall have a casting vote in addition to any other vote he or she may have.
- (3) A resolution in writing signed by each member (or, in the case of a member that is an organisation, by its authorised representative) who would have been entitled to vote upon the resolution had it been proposed at a general meeting shall be effective. It may comprise several copies each signed by or on behalf of one or more members.

15. Representatives of Other Bodies at General Meetings

- (1) Any organisation that is a member of the Charity may nominate any person to act as its representative at any meeting of the Charity.
- (2) The organisation must give written notice to the Charity of the name of its representative. The nominee shall not be entitled to represent the organisation at any meeting unless the notice has been received by the Charity. The nominee may continue to represent the organisation until written notice to the contrary is received by the Charity.
- (3) Any notice given to the Charity will be conclusive evidence that the nominee is entitled to represent the organisation or that his or her authority has been revoked. The Charity shall not be required to consider whether the nominee has been properly appointed by the organisation.

16. Officers and Trustees

- (1) The Charity and its property shall be managed and administered by a Council comprising the Officers and other members elected in accordance with these Rules. The Officers and other elected members of the Council shall be the Trustees of the Charity and in these Rules are together called "the Trustees".
- (2) The Charity shall have the following Officers:
 - A President,
 - Two Vice Presidents,
 - A Secretary,
 - A Treasurer.
- (3) A Trustee must be a member of the Charity or the nominated representative of an organisation that is a member of the Charity.
- (4) No one may be elected a Trustee if he or she would be disqualified from acting under the provisions of Clause 19.
- (5) The number of Trustees shall be not fewer than seven and not more than fifteen.
- (6) A Trustee may not appoint anyone to act on his or her behalf at meetings of the Trustees.

17. Appointment of Trustees

- (1) Officers and other Trustees shall be elected by members of the Charity at an Annual General Meeting. Candidates nominated by the Trustees shall be notified to the membership at least twenty-one days before the meeting.
- (2) The Charity's members may nominate individuals to stand for election as a Trustee or as an Officer at any annual general meeting provided that the Charity is given a notice that:
 - (a) is signed by at least five members entitled to vote at the meeting;
 - (b) states the members' intention to propose the nomination of a person as a Trustee or as an Officer;
 - (c) is signed by the person who is to be nominated to show his or her willingness to be nominated.
 - (d) and the notice of nomination is received by the Charity no later than 15 February of the year in which the annual general meeting is to be held.
- (3) The election of a Trustee, whether by the Charity in general meeting or co-opted by the other Trustees (clause 18 (m) of these Rules), must not cause the number of Trustees to exceed any number fixed in accordance with these Rules as the maximum number of Trustees.
- (4) The Trustees may appoint a President-elect, or invite nominations for the next President of the Charity to be elected at an annual general meeting at

the beginning of the last year of the current President's term of office. If the next President is so elected, and is not already a serving Trustee, he or she shall be an elected Trustee of the Charity for the year between the election and the commencement of his or her term of office.

- (5) Trustees shall serve for a term of four years unless elected to another post on Council during or at the end of such term.

In respect of this Clause,

- (a) a year for the purposes of this rule shall run from the close of an annual general meeting to the close of the next.
- (b) the Treasurer and Secretary shall be eligible for immediate re-election save that an ordinary elected member shall be eligible for election as an Officer.
- (c) Vice Presidents shall be eligible for immediate re-election for a further single two-year term.
- (d) other elected Trustees may be re-elected with a minimum of one year between terms of office.
- (e) those serving as President may serve a total term of five years which includes the year appointed by the Trustees or elected by the Charity's membership as President-elect.

18. Powers of Trustees

- (1) The Trustees must manage the business of the Charity and have the following powers in order to further the Objects (but not for any other purpose):
- (a) to raise funds for the Charity in compliance with any relevant statutory regulations;
 - (b) to buy, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any property and to maintain and equip it for use;
 - (c) to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of all or any part of the property belonging to the Charity. In exercising this power, the Trustees must comply as appropriate with sections 36 and 37 of the Charities Act 1993, as amended by the Charities Act 2006;
 - (d) to borrow money and to charge the whole or any part of the property belonging to the Charity as security for repayment of the money borrowed. The Trustees must comply as appropriate with sections 38 and 39 of the Charities Act 1993, as amended by the Charities Act 2006, if they intend to mortgage land;
 - (e) to co-operate with other charities, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities and to exchange information and advice with them;

- (f) to establish or support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for any of the charitable purposes included in the Objects;
 - (g) to acquire, merge with or enter into any partnership or joint venture arrangement with any other Charity formed for any of the Objects;
 - (h) to set aside income as a reserve against future expenditure but only in accordance with a written policy about reserves;
 - (j) to obtain and pay for such goods and services as are necessary for carrying out the work of the Charity;
 - (k) to open and operate such bank and other accounts as the Trustees consider necessary and to invest funds and to delegate the management of funds in the same manner and subject to the same conditions as the Trustees of a trust are permitted to do by the Trustee Act 2000;
 - (l) to co-opt any member of the Charity who is willing to act as a Trustee to fill any vacancy which arises until such a vacancy can be filled at a general meeting;
 - (m) to appoint and manage such staff as the Trustees consider necessary to operate the Charity in furtherance of its Objects.
- (2) To do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the Objects.
 - (3) No alteration of these Rules or any special resolution shall have retrospective effect to invalidate any prior act of the Trustees.
 - (4) Any meeting of Trustees at which a quorum is present at the time the relevant decision is made may exercise all the powers exercisable by the Trustees.

19. Disqualification and Removal of Trustees

A Trustee shall cease to hold office if he or she:

- (1) is disqualified for acting as a Trustee by virtue of section 72 of the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision);
- (2) ceases to be a member of the Charity (Clause 8);
- (3) becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs;
- (4) resigns as a Trustee by notice to the Charity (but only if at least two Trustees will remain in office when the notice of resignation is to take effect); or
- (5) is absent without the permission of the Trustees from all their meetings held within a period of 12 consecutive months and the Trustees resolve that his or her office be vacated.

20. Proceedings of Trustees

- (1) The Trustees may regulate their proceedings as they think fit, subject to the provisions of these Rules.
- (2) Any Trustee may call a meeting of the Trustees.
- (3) The secretary must call a meeting of the Trustees if requested to do so by a Trustee.
- (4) Questions arising at a meeting must be decided by a majority of votes.
- (5) In the case of an equality of votes, the person who chairs the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
- (6) No decision may be made by a meeting of the Trustees unless a quorum is present at the time the decision is purported to be made.
- (7) The quorum shall be at least five Trustees, of which two are Officers subject to clause (8) of this clause.
- (8) A Trustee shall not be counted in the quorum present when any decision is made about a matter upon which that Trustee is not entitled to vote.
- (9) If the number of Trustees is less than the number fixed as the quorum, the continuing Trustees or Trustee may act only for the purpose of filling vacancies or of calling a general meeting.
- (10) The person elected as the Chair shall chair meetings of the Trustees.
- (11) If the Chair is unwilling to preside or is not present within ten minutes after the time appointed for the meeting, the Trustees present may appoint one of their number to chair that meeting.
- (12) The person appointed to chair meetings of the Trustees shall have no functions or powers except those conferred by these Rules or delegated to him or her in writing by the Trustees.
- (13) A resolution in writing signed by all the Trustees entitled to receive notice of a meeting of Trustees or of a committee of Trustees and to vote upon the resolution shall be as valid and effectual as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Trustees or (as the case may be) a committee of Trustees duly convened and held.
- (14) The resolution in writing may comprise several documents containing the text of the resolution in like form each signed by one or more Trustees.
- (15) A signed resolution from each Trustee can take the form of a personal email.

21. Delegation

- (1) The Trustees may delegate any of their powers or functions to:

- (a) Committees, who shall be subject to any Standing Orders approved by the Trustees and/or any other conditions applied by the Trustees;
 - (b) Employees of the Charity, who shall be subject to their respective terms of employment and/or job description and/or any other conditions applied by the Trustees;
 - (c) If not already forming part of a committee's standing orders or an employee's terms of employment and/or job description, such delegated items are to be recorded at a meeting of the Trustees.
- (2) The Trustees may impose conditions when delegating, including the conditions that:
 - the relevant powers are to be exercised exclusively by the committee to whom they delegate;
 - no expenditure may be incurred on behalf of the Charity except in accordance with a budget previously agreed with the Trustees.
 - (3) The Trustees may revoke or alter a delegation.
 - (4) All acts and proceedings of any committees must be fully and promptly reported to the Trustees.
 - (5) The Trustees retain responsibility for all delegated items.

22. Irregularities in Proceedings

- (1) Subject to sub-clause (2) of this clause, all acts done by a meeting of Trustees, or by a delegated committee approved by the Trustees, shall be valid notwithstanding the participation in any vote of a Trustee:
 - who was disqualified from holding office;
 - who had previously retired or who had been obliged by these Rules to vacate office;
 - who was not entitled to vote on the matter, whether by reason of a conflict of interest or otherwise;
 if, without:
 - the vote of that Trustee; and
 - that Trustee being counted in the quorum, the decision has been made by a majority of the Trustees at a quorate meeting.
- (2) Sub-clause (1) of this clause does not permit a Trustee to keep any benefit that may be conferred upon him or her by a resolution of the Trustees or of a committee of Trustees if the resolution would otherwise have been void.

- (3) No resolution or act of
 - (a) the Trustees
 - (b) any committee approved by the Trustees
 - (c) the Charity in general meeting

shall be invalidated by reason of the failure to give notice to any Trustee or member or by reason of any procedural defect in the meeting unless it is shown that the failure or defect has materially prejudiced a member or the beneficiaries of the Charity.

23. Minutes

The Trustees must keep minutes of all:

- (1) appointments of Officers and Trustees made by the Trustees;
- (2) proceedings at meetings of the Charity;
- (3) meetings of the Trustees and committees approved by the Trustees including:
 - the names of all persons present at the meeting;
 - the decisions made at the meetings; and
 - where appropriate the reasons for the decisions.

24. Annual Report and Return and Accounts

- (1) The Trustees must comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1993 with regard to:
 - (a) the keeping of accounting records for the Charity;
 - (b) the preparation of annual statements of account for the Charity;
 - (c) the transmission of the statements of account to the Charity;
 - (d) the preparation of an Annual Report and its transmission to the Commission;
- (2) Accounts must be prepared in accordance with the provisions of any Statement of Recommended Practice issued by the Commission, unless the Trustees are required to prepare accounts in accordance with the provisions of such a Statement prepared by another body.

25. Registered particulars

The Trustees must notify the Commission promptly of any changes to the Charity's entry on the Central Register of Charities.

26. Property

- (1) The Trustees must ensure the title to:
 - (a) all land held by or in trust for the Charity that is not vested in the Official Custodian of Charities; and
 - (b) all investments held by or on behalf of the Charity is vested either in a corporation entitled to act as custodian Trustee or in not fewer than three individuals appointed by them as holding Trustees.
- (2) The terms of the appointment of any holding Trustees must provide that they may act only in accordance with lawful directions of the Trustees and that if they do so they will not be liable for the acts and defaults of the Trustees or of the members of the Charity.
- (3) The Trustees may remove the holding Trustees at any time.

27. Repair and insurance

The Trustees must keep in repair and insure to their full value against fire and other usual risks all the buildings of the Charity (except those buildings that are required to be kept in repair and insured by a tenant). They must also insure suitably in respect of public liability and employer's liability.

28. Notices

- (1) Any notice required by these Rules to be given to or by any person must be:
 - (a) in writing; or
 - (b) given using electronic communications.
- (2) The Charity may give any notice to a member either:
 - (a) personally; or
 - (b) by sending it by post in a prepaid envelope addressed to the member at his or her address; or
 - (c) by leaving it at the address of the member; or
 - (d) by giving it using electronic communications to the member's address.
- (3) Any member who does not register either a postal or email address with the Charity shall not be entitled to receive any notice from the Charity.
- (4) A member present in person at any meeting of the Charity shall be deemed to

have received notice of the meeting and of the purposes for which it was called.

- (5) (a) Proof that an envelope containing a notice was properly addressed, prepaid and posted shall be conclusive evidence that the notice was given.
- (b) Proof that a notice contained in an electronic communication was sent in accordance with guidance issued by the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators shall be conclusive evidence that the notice was given.
- (c) A notice shall be deemed to be given 48 hours after the envelope containing it was posted or, in the case of an electronic communication, 48 hours after it was sent.

29. Changes to the Rules

- (1) The Trustees may from time to time make changes to these rules or bye-laws for the conduct of their business.
- (2) The bye-laws may regulate the following matters but are not restricted to them:
 - (a) the admission of members of the Charity (including the admission of organisations to membership) and the rights and privileges of such members, and the entrance fees, subscriptions and other fees or payments to be made by members;
 - (b) the conduct of members of the Charity in relation to one another, and to the Charity's employees and volunteers;
 - (c) the setting aside of the whole or any part or parts of the Charity's premises at any particular time or times or for any particular purpose or purposes;
 - (d) the procedure at general meeting and meetings of the Trustees in so far as such procedure is not regulated by these Rules;
 - (e) the keeping and authenticating of records. (If regulations made under this clause permit records of the Charity to be kept in electronic form and requires a Trustee to sign the record, the regulations must specify a method of recording the signature that enables it to be properly authenticated.)
 - (f) generally, all such matters as are commonly the subject matter of the rules of an unincorporated association.
- (3) The Charity in general meeting has the power to alter, add to or repeal rules or bye-laws.
- (4) The Trustees must adopt such means as they think sufficient to bring the rules and bye-laws to the notice of members of the Charity.
- (5) Rules or bye-laws shall be binding on all members of the Charity. No rule or

bye-law shall be inconsistent with, or shall affect or repeal anything contained in, these Rules.

Approved: BOU AGM 7 April 2010.

Amended: BOU Council 09 November 2010

Approved Charity Commission: 25 February 2011

Amended: BOU Council 11 July 2018