

**North East Humanists**  
Registered Charity No.1112965

## **Bye-Laws**

### **1. Adoption of these Bye-Laws**

These Bye-Laws were adopted at the Special General Meeting on 19 January 2012, to come into effect at the AGM on 15 March 2012. They must be read in conjunction with the Constitution. Throughout these Bye-Laws the North East Humanists is referred to as “the Charity”.

### **2. Changing the Bye-Laws**

These Bye-Laws may be changed by a simple majority at a general meeting, except for clause 13 which can be changed by a resolution of the Trustees.

### **3. President and Vice-Presidents**

The Trustees may appoint a President who shall hold office for 5 years. The appointment will be in recognition of his/her contribution to the work of North East Humanists or for other significant work in advancing the cause of Humanism.

The Trustees may appoint up to three Vice-Presidents who shall hold office for 3 years. The appointment(s) will be in recognition of his/her contribution to the work of North East Humanists or for other significant work in advancing the cause of Humanism.

Neither the President nor the Vice-Presidents shall be ex-officio Trustees.

### **4. Election of Trustees**

At the AGM, the posts of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Education Officer, Fundraising and Social Projects Officer, Press and Publicity Officer, Programme Secretary shall be filled by election. In addition six Trustees shall be elected who are not officers. To be eligible for election as a Trustee the person must be a member of the Charity and at least 18 years old. Voting shall be by those present at the AGM. There shall also be proxy votes but no postal votes. Those intending to exercise proxy votes must have evidence of their right to exercise a proxy vote. For the election of Officers each member shall have one vote per Officer post. For the election of the six non-Officer Trustees each member can vote for up to six candidates. A member who votes for more than six candidates shall have all his/her votes declared invalid.

In order to stand for election as a Trustee ( including those who are standing as Officers ) a nomination for that member must be received by the Secretary no later than 4 weeks prior to the start of the AGM.

The nomination can be sent to the Secretary EITHER by hard copy OR by email:

In the case of a hard copy nomination, the nomination paper must be signed by the member making the nomination and by the member seconding the nomination. There must also be a signed statement on the nomination paper by the person being nominated stating his or her willingness to stand.

In the case of an email nomination, 3 SEPARATE emails must be received by the Secretary. ALL of them must be received 4 weeks prior to the start of the AGM :

1. An email from the member making the nomination
2. An email from the member seconding the nomination
3. An email from the person being nominated stating his/her willingness to stand.

Any member whose nomination as an Officer does not lead to election shall automatically be considered as a nominee for ordinary membership of the Trustees, unless the candidate indicates otherwise at the time of nomination. For Trustees seeking re-election, the Secretary shall make known to the AGM their attendance records at meetings of the Trustees over the previous year.

### **5. Appointment of Trustees**

The Trustees may appoint any person who is willing to act as a Trustee, who is a member of North East Humanists and who is at least 18 years old, provided that the total number of Trustees at any one time does not exceed sixteen.

They may also appoint Trustees to act as officers, provided that there is a vacancy in the relevant officer post. Any such officer appointment shall be known as eg the “Acting Treasurer”, to signify that the post was filled by appointment by the Trustees and not by election at the AGM.

An appointment to a vacancy in a non-officer Trustee position shall only be made in an emergency situation, except for the possible appointment of a Trustee from Teesside ( see immediately below ).

If, after the elections at the AGM, there is not a Trustee who lives on Teesside, the Trustees shall appoint a Trustee from Teesside. If a member of the Charity from Teesside has stood in the elections for Trustees at the AGM and has

been unsuccessful, that person, rather than a member who has not stood for election, shall be appointed under this section of this clause.

Before the appointment of a Trustee is made, the membership shall be made aware of the intention to make an appointment, except in an emergency situation, when the membership shall be informed immediately after the appointment.

#### **6. Creation of Additional Officer Posts**

The Trustees may at any time create Officer posts in addition to the posts listed in 4 above. The Trustees may also remove such posts. The Trustees shall decide whether such posts are to be filled by appointment by the Trustees or by election from the general membership (preferable). The holders of these posts shall not be ex-officio Trustees. Those appointed/elected to these posts will hold them from the time of their appointment to the next AGM. Before any appointment to an Additional Officer Post is made, the membership shall be made aware of the intention to make such an appointment.

#### **7. Creation of Assistant Officer Posts**

The Trustees may at any time create or remove Assistant Officer posts. Assistant Officers shall undertake administrative work under the direction of an Officer, to whom they will be accountable. These posts shall be filled by appointment by the Trustees. The holders of these posts shall not be ex-officio Trustees. They shall hold them from the time of their appointment until either the abolition of the post or until the next Annual General Meeting, whichever is sooner.

Before any appointment to an Assistant Officer Post is made, the membership shall be made aware of the intention to make such an appointment.

#### **8. Affiliated organisations**

Organisations may request that they become affiliated to North East Humanists. The decision on affiliation will be made by the Trustees. All members of such affiliated organisations shall have the right to attend the meetings of North East Humanists, except for the meetings of the Trustees. They shall not have the right to vote. Any entry charges for meetings for members of affiliated organisations will be determined by the Trustees.

#### **9. Organisations to which North East Humanists is affiliated**

(1) Current organisations to which the Charity is affiliated are: The British Humanist Association (BHA); the National Secular Society (NSS); the European Humanist Federation (EHF); the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU); and the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association (GALHA). NEH is also a member of the Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service.

(2) Affiliations to other bodies may be sought by resolution of a general meeting.

(3) The Trustees shall have the authority:

- i) To send delegates, or representatives, to the Annual General and other conferences or meetings, including sectional events, organised by the BHA, the NSS and any other organisation to which NEH is affiliated;
- ii) To pay travel and subsistence expenses to members who represent NEH at any such event;

#### **10. Finance**

(1) After the accounts for the previous calendar year have been finalised, the Treasurer shall consult with the Trustees on the preparation of a draft budget for the current calendar year and report this to the Annual General Meeting

(2) The Trustees shall determine the policy of the Charity with respect to the reimbursement of members for expenditure on travel whilst on the business of the Charity. In particular they shall determine a figure per mile for car journeys authorised by the Trustees.

(3) Officers shall have the discretion to purchase goods and services on behalf of the Charity, provided that any individual purchase does not exceed a sum set annually by the Trustees. Above this sum the approval of the Trustees is required.

(4) The Treasurer shall prepare accounts for the calendar year as soon as possible after the end of the calendar year and submit these for approval to the Trustees. These accounts, after approval or modification by the Trustees, shall be audited and then submitted to the membership at the AGM.

#### **11. Return to the Charity Commission**

The Chair and the Secretary shall jointly be responsible for making the annual return required by the Charity Commission, after it has been approved by the Trustees. This shall be done as soon as possible after the start of the new calendar year.

#### **12. Printed copies of the Bye-Laws and Constitution**

Copies of the Constitution shall be commercially printed and held by the Secretary of the Association, such copies to be made available to members and to others on request.

Commercially printed copies of the Bye-Laws shall be sent to all existing members of the Association who have not yet received them and to new members at the time of their joining.

#### **13. Responsibilities of Officers**

The Officers shall have the duties and responsibilities as set out in the Constitution, which shall be subject to change only by resolution of the Annual General Meeting, or a Special General Meeting, as stipulated in rule 7, subsection 2

of the Constitution.

The Officers shall also have any duties and responsibilities set out in clauses one to eleven of these Bye-Laws. These can only be changed by changing these Bye-Laws.

Additional responsibilities, current at the 2012 AGM, are listed below. These additional responsibilities can be changed by a resolution of the Trustees, provided that any changes are not in conflict with the constitution and clauses one to ten of these Bye-Laws. The relevant resolution(s) should be appended to these Bye-Laws when they are made and this clause of the Bye-Laws should be appropriately changed at the time of the following AGM.

#### **(1) Chair**

- a) To chair General Meetings, the meetings of the Trustees and regular monthly meetings or to arrange for an alternative Chair when necessary.
- b) To maintain an overview of all of the activities undertaken by the Charity, and to ensure that the provisions of the Constitution, the Bye-laws and the requirements of the Charity Commission are adhered to.
- c) To ensure that the financial status of the Charity is maintained in a viable position.
- d) To encourage the Charity to present a positive image in its relationships with its members, with other organisations and the general public.
- e) To ensure, together with the Secretary, that the annual return required by the Charity Commission is made ( see clause 11).

#### **(2) Vice-Chair**

- a) To chair meetings in the absence of the Chair, or to arrange for a substitute if necessary.
- b) To replicate the responsibilities of the Chair as in (1) b) - d), above.

#### **(3) Secretary**

- a) To prepare, in consultation with the Chair, agendas for the meetings of the Trustees for circulation at least 7 days in advance of the meeting and to ensure that the minutes of these meetings are made available no more than 7 days after the meeting.
- b) To obtain and collate the annual reports of Officers by 15 January each year.
- c) To issue the Notice of the general meetings ( AGM and Special General Meetings ) and agenda to the membership, along with the annual Reports of Officers in the case of the AGM, and to ensure that the minutes of these meetings are made available no more than 14 days after the meeting.
- d) To operate the relevant administrative procedures at the AGM and Special General Meetings. These include procedures for the election of the Trustees and procedures for dealing with motions.
- e) To respond to queries from the public about the nature of NEH, BHA, ceremonies and celebrants.
- f) In co-operation with the Treasurer, to prepare a draft budget for the Trustees before the start of the calendar year ( see clause 10 ).
- g) To maintain a list of affiliated organisations.
- h) To ensure, together with the Chair, that the annual return required by the Charity Commission is made ( see clause 11).

#### **(4) Treasurer**

- a) To monitor the Charity's finances and to inform the Secretary, Chair, and Trustees of any concerns.
- b) To pay out all legitimate expenses incurred on behalf of the Charity within the approved limits of expenditure and subject to the provision of an appropriate receipt.
- c) To maintain records which will enable statements of the Charity's financial status to be made to the committee during the year.
- d) To provide an annual statement of accounts for the AGM following the year end.
- e) To provide the Trustees with guidance on any corrective action required to maintain a satisfactory financial position.
- f) To apply to the Inland revenue for the refund of Gift Aid.
- g) To prepare accounts for the calendar year as soon as possible after the end of the calendar year and submit these to the Trustees. These accounts, after approval by the Trustees, shall be audited and then submitted to the membership for information at the AGM.
- h) To keep an inventory of all the property of the Charity.

#### **(5) Education Officer**

- a) To establish contact with schools and colleges in the North East and to promote the inclusion of 'Humanist' themes in school activities.
- b) To arrange for speakers to attend schools and colleges.
- c) To build up a panel of members prepared to deliver sessions in schools and colleges.
- d) To arrange training for Education panel members.
- e) To arrange for the provision of introductory courses in Humanism for members and the public.
- f) To monitor the position with regard to NEH representation on SACRES.
- g) Before the end of the calendar year, to provide the Treasurer with an estimate of expenditure for the following calendar year.

**(6) Fund Raising and Social Projects Officer**

- a) To oversee fund raising activities for NEH as approved by the Trustees, to co-ordinate the work of the Fund Raising and Social Projects Sub-Committee, and to keep records of the work of the sub-committee and minutes of its meetings.
- b) To oversee the fund raising activities for good causes chosen by members at the AGM.
- c) To ensure that assurances will be received that donations to other charities or good causes will be used solely for purposes agreed with the Trustees.
- d) To oversee the management of all aspects of social events.
- e) To ensure that all social events arranged for members are self-financing.
- f) Before the end of the calendar year, to provide the Treasurer with an estimate of expenditure for the following calendar year.

**(7) Media and Publicity Officer**

- a) To seek ways of publicising the existence and aims of NEH.
- b) To develop contacts with the media.
- c) To encourage members to communicate Humanist views to the media including participation in radio and local TV shows.
- d) To ensure that the Charity's website and other electronic means of communications, e.g., Facebook, Wikipedia, are kept up to date.
- e) To facilitate members in the organisation and carrying out of campaigns.
- f) To ensure that entries in local telephone directories are up to date.
- g) To arrange for speakers to address groups requesting information about humanism.
- h) To organise city centre, library, and other displays at, e.g., Newcastle Green Fest, and to recruit help for the manning of stalls at these events.
- i) Before the end of the calendar year, to provide the Treasurer with an estimate of expenditure for the following calendar year.

**(8) Membership Secretary**

- a) To respond to enquirers about NEH or prospective members with an information package.
- b) On receipt of application forms, to send a welcome letter or e-mail plus any other information not already sent.
- c) To maintain a computer membership list with address, telephone number, status of membership subscription, and the identification of those wishing to withhold this information from other members.
- d) To notify the Media and Publicity Officer of the deaths of members for mention on the electronic notice board.
- e) To maintain a file of correspondence and of subscriptions paid.
- f) To follow up unpaid subscriptions with one reminder.
- g) As far as possible, to be aware of members who are not in good health or who are socially isolated and who might be helped by NEH Link, GROUP LINK, car-sharing, and similar schemes.
- h) To provide the Treasurer with a breakdown of subscription cheques/cash/standing orders into `subscriptions` and `donations`.
- i) Before the end of the calendar year, to provide the Treasurer with an estimate of expenditure for the following calendar year.

**(9) Programme Officer**

- a) To arrange an annual programme for the monthly meetings of members and the public.
- b) To oversee the arrangements for regional conferences, and other occasional meetings, including those set up in co-operation with universities and other bodies.
- c) To arrange for guest speakers to be reimbursed for travel, refreshment and accommodation expenses, as approved by the Trustees.
- d) To provide leaflets, books, and other materials, as appropriate, at programmed events.
- e) Before the end of the calendar year, to provide the Treasurer with an estimate of expenditure for the following calendar year.

**13. Management Committee**

The Trustees shall be known informally as The Management Committee.

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- Amended 21.03.2013
- Amended 20.03.2014
- Amended 21.05.2015
- Amended 15.03.2018