

South West London Humanists – Constitution



Adopted at AGM 25 June 2012

1. NAME

The group shall be called 'South West London Humanists' or 'SWLH' (herein 'the Group').

2. AIMS

The Group shall aim to:

- 2.1. Make a positive contribution to Humanism locally by providing a forum for humanists to meet, to develop their knowledge and thinking, and to develop the sense of a local community of humanists within the wider community.
- 2.2. Increase awareness and understanding of Humanism, in particular by making a positive contribution to the wider local community.
- 2.3. Campaign for respect for those who seek to live ethical and responsible lives without religious or superstitious beliefs, and against religious privilege.
- 2.4. Carry out and support appropriate charitable activities.
- 2.5. Fulfil the role of a Partner of the British Humanist Association ('BHA') in line with the Partnership Agreement between the BHA and the Group.

It will pursue these aims in a manner that is welcoming and tolerant.

3. MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

- 3.1. The Group will welcome anyone who supports its aims, regardless of ability, age, gender, race, or sexual orientation.
- 3.2. Anyone who signs up to the Group's contact list shall be defined as a 'Supporter' of the Group. Anyone who has also paid the Group's membership fee, (see below), shall be defined as a 'Member' of the Group. Voting rights at general meetings shall be reserved for Members of the Group only (see below).
- 3.3. The Group will actively encourage its members and supporters to become members or supporters of the BHA.
- 4.2. The Group will safeguard the confidentiality of information about its Members and Supporters, and any other information communicated in confidence by the BHA.
- 4.3. The Group retains the right to refuse or withdraw Membership or Supporter status from any Member or Supporter who fails to support its constitution or Partnership Agreement, or who brings the Group or the BHA into disrepute.

5. MANAGEMENT

An executive committee ('the Committee') shall manage the Group in line with its Aims

- 5.1. The Committee shall have up to eight elected Committee members, including the following three 'Officers', and may co-opt up to two further (non-voting) members:
 - 5.1.1. The Chair, who will also chair the Committee and any general meetings (unless otherwise delegated);
 - 5.1.2. The Treasurer, who will be responsible for ensuring that the Group fulfils its financial requirements (see point 7);
 - 5.1.3. The Secretary, who – among other roles – will be responsible for the conduct of elections to the Committee.

Further definition of the roles and responsibilities of Committee members will be decided by the Committee and subject to review at least annually.

- 5.2. The Officers and other Committee members shall be individually elected every year at the Annual General Meeting ('AGM').
- 5.3. Committee vacancies arising between elections may be filled at the Committee's discretion.
- 5.4. The Committee may invite up to two non-voting Co-Opted members to join the Committee at any time and to serve until the date of the next AGM.
- 5.5. The Committee shall meet at least once every three months and at least a fortnight's notice of forthcoming Committee meetings will be provided to all Committee members.
- 5.6. The Committee will be in quorum when at least four Committee members are present, including at least two Officers.

6. GENERAL MEETINGS

- 6.1. The group shall hold an Annual General Meeting ('AGM') before the end of July each year, which will:
 - 6.1.1. Receive the financial accounts and reports from the Committee for the period ending the 31st March of the same year as the AGM;
 - 6.1.2. Elect the Officers and other members of the Committee, who will serve from the date of the AGM;
 - 6.1.3. Discuss and vote on any resolutions that have been proposed.
- 6.2. The Secretary or Chair shall inform Members at least 21 days before the AGM of the opening of nominations for election to the Committee.
- 6.3. Nominations, duly seconded, and notices of resolutions must be received by the Secretary at least seven days before the AGM.

- 6.4. An Exceptional General Meeting (EGM) may be convened by the Committee or by petition to the Secretary of at least one fifth of the Members. The petition must state the purpose of the EGM and give notice of any resolutions. The Secretary shall convene an EGM within six weeks of the receipt of such a petition. Only the items stated in the notice given to Members shall be considered at the EGM.
- 6.5. Members shall be given at least 21 days' notice of AGMs and EGMs.
- 6.6. Only Group Members shall have voting-rights at general meetings.
- 6.7. A general meeting shall be in quorum if at least three Committee members are present and the number of ordinary Group Members present is one more than the number of Committee members present.
- 6.8. In any dispute concerning the affairs of the Group a general meeting shall be the final authority.

7. FINANCE

- 7.1. The Committee will be responsible for maintaining the financial viability of the Group, and for deciding membership fees, on the basis of advice from the Treasurer.
- 7.2. The Treasurer will be responsible for ensuring the annual BHA Partnership fee is paid on time.
- 7.3. There shall be an annual membership fee and appropriate concessionary rates. Any change to these fees shall be agreed at the AGM, based on a proposal made by the Treasurer.
- 7.4. The Group may hold events for the purpose of raising funds, either for the Group or an appropriate charitable cause.
- 7.5. The income and property of the Group shall be used solely to pursue the Aims of the Group.
- 7.6. The Group's bank account shall be in the name of the Group, and accessible by the Treasurer and at least one other Officer.
- 7.7. The Officers may not receive payment for their services to the Group.
- 7.8. In the event of the Group being dissolved, all remaining funds after payment of liabilities shall go to the British Humanist Association.

8. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

- 8.1. The Group shall be a Partner of the British Humanist Association ('the BHA'), as defined by the Partnership Agreement between the BHA and the Group, of May 2012, as updated from time to time.

- 8.2. The Group may affiliate to other appropriate bodies, subject to approval at a general meeting. But the Group may not affiliate to, or publicly support, any political party.
- 8.3. Within the Group's resources and capabilities, and taking into account local circumstances, when engaging in external activities and dealing with third-parties the Group shall support the BHA's aims, strategy, policies and values, and will not take any action that brings Humanism or the BHA into disrepute.
- 8.4. If there is a conflict between activities in support of any other organisations the Group is affiliated or associated with, and those in support of the BHA's aims, values and policies, the Group will give priority to the latter.

9. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The constitution may be amended by a resolution passed by at least two-thirds of the Members present at a general meeting. Notice of resolutions to change the constitution must be included in the notice of the general meeting.