

HYTHE CIVIC SOCIETY

REPORT 5.4 TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 28 MAY 2024

Amendment to the Constitution

1. To address various circumstances to ensure the Constitution remains up-to-date and effective, the Executive Committee proposes amendments to a number of Clauses as follows:

Clause 3 – Memberships (specifically in relation to **Life Memberships and Special Honorary Memberships**)

a) Life Memberships

2. Current wording:

'...The Society may at an AGM or SGM confer on a member the honour of Honorary Life Membership in recognition of outstanding services rendered to the Society as recommended by the Committee.'

Reason: Although not formalised in the Constitution, in past years, officers, committee members and ex-officio committee members (including the president and vice presidents) have tended to be considered for life membership if they have served for a period of at least ten years. It is now proposed to add wording to the existing clause to clarify this type of award. Further it is proposed to add wording in respect of the spouse or partner of a deceased life member.

3. Proposed new wording:

'...The Society may at an AGM or SGM confer on a member the honour of Honorary Life Membership in recognition of outstanding services rendered to the Society as recommended by the Committee. Consideration for Honorary Life Membership may, but not exclusively include an existing or former President, Vice President, Officer of the Society or a Committee Member who has given 10 years or more active support to the Society in such a role. Further, a spouse or a partner of a deceased Life Member may be awarded honorary Life Membership.'

If adopted by the Annual General Meeting, the following persons are proposed to be offered the award of Life Memberships:

Janine Umbers

Crispin Davies – *committee member and former chairman.*

Betty Black – 8 years a committee member and Vice Chairman (standing down in May 2024), and beforehand a Talks Team member/leader of longstanding.

Anne Petrie – former chair and founder of the re-established Local History Group, former Society Committee member, and a notable local historian.

b) Special Honorary Memberships

4. Current wording:

'...The Executive Committee may confer a 'special membership' to a donor of an item of property to the Society for a period the Committee deems appropriate, subject to any such decisions being announced to the membership.'

When this wording was added in 2022, it was intended to recognise non-monetary donations to the Society that are of some significant local importance. It is now considered appropriate to also acknowledge the contribution given to the society in the form of significant services of an unpaid basis.

5. Proposed new wording:

'...The Executive Committee may confer a special honorary membership for a period the Committee deems appropriate to a donor of a non-monetary item of significant local importance or to a person who has provided significant voluntary services to the Society, subject to any such decisions being announced to the membership.'

If adopted by the Annual General Meeting, the following persons are proposed to be offered the award of Special Honorary Memberships:

David and Joan Horton (life) – *for the gift to the Society of a vast number of glass plate negatives and documents relating to the Horton's of Hythe of significant local importance*

Roy Moore and Eric Hartland founders of the Kent Photo Archive (life) – *for their voluntary services over three years currently in digitising and promoting thousands of negatives from the Society's 'Jack Adams' collection.*

John Adams (life) – *son of the late Jack Adams for his bequest in 1999 of the vast collection of Jack Adams' negatives and for his help more recently with our exhibitions material.*

Susan and Michael Parfitt (life) – *for giving access to a large quantity of historical family documents of significant local importance (many property deeds and photographs dating back to the mid 1700s) for digitisation by the Society.*

Susie Warran-Smith (life) – *for significant design, editorial, and publishing voluntary services to the Society.*

6. **Proposed Additional Note to the Constitution**

Life and Special Honorary Memberships

As an explanatory note the following wording is recommended:

Life Members and Special Honorary Members do not pay annual subscriptions. They are entitled to receive Newsletters, attend Society Talks and Events on the same basis as Society Members. Life Members may attend, raise motions and vote at annual or special general meetings. As a complimentary title, Special Honorary Members may attend annual or special meetings but may not vote.

7. **Clause 6 – Officers (specifically in relation to the President and Vice Presidents)**

Current wording:

'A ...President and Vice Presidents (who shall not become members of the Executive Committee) may also be elected at a meeting of the Society...'

Proposed: delete the words in brackets.

Reason: to permit the Executive to propose a President or Vice President(s) to take a full role in the Committee where such an appointment is considered to be in the best interests of the Society.

8. **Clause 7 – Executive Committee**

Current wording:

'...The...President and Vice Presidents, if appointed, may attend and speak at committee meetings, but may not vote...'

Proposed: add the following after 'but may not vote'... 'unless a President or Vice President has been appointed as a member of the Committee.

Reason: in the best interests of the Society.

9. **Clause 13 – Amendments**

The existing wording requires updating to ensure its requirements are compatible with current regulations.

Current wording:

'...no amendment shall be made to Clause 2 (Objects), Clause 15 (Winding up) or this Clause (13) until the approval, in writing, of the Charity **Commission....**'

Proposed: after 'or this Clause' add '..and any other regulated amendment.....'

10. **Is Charity Commission Approval for any of the proposed amendments required?**

Under current Commission guidance and regulations, the Committee's proposals would **not** require the consent of the Commission, notwithstanding that our Constitution (when originally worded) requires all amendments to be approved. Commission approval is now required only for certain, more fundamental (regulated) amendments, hence the amendment to Clause 13 above.

RECOMMENDATION to the AGM

The Annual Meeting is requested to approve the proposed Constitutional Amendments and the proposed awards.