

B&CLHS AGM 2024 – Attached documents

6 Introduction of joint membership

The committee is proposing this change because we have a few dual individual memberships and sometimes they contact us to say that we should send only one Journal (although entitled to two). This new membership category would simplify the work of distributing the Journal. Each member would have individual voting rights. As this change would be an amendment to our constitution it requires the approval of two-thirds of the members attending the AGM.

Resolution to change the Society's Constitution

The following motion is proposed

That the Society's Constitution be changed by deleting clause 3 (membership) and substituting in its place the following clause

Membership

- a) Membership of the Society shall be open to any interested person who has attained the age of twelve years.
- b) There will be two classes of membership:
 - i) Single Membership. This is open to any person wishing to be a member of the Society and who is eligible
 - ii) Joint Membership. This is open to two people living at the same address who wish to be members and who are eligible
- c) Members shall be required to pay such annual subscription for their membership class as shall from time to time be determined by an Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.
- d) Voting at any Annual General Meeting or any Special General meeting shall be:
 - i) Each Single Member will be entitled to one vote.
 - ii) The two people who form a Joint Membership will each be separately entitled to one vote.
- e) Whenever the Society chooses to publish a Journal, each Single Member will be entitled to one free copy and each Joint Membership shall only be entitled to one copy between the two people.

7 Resolution to change the annual subscription

At this AGM the Committee is recommending to members that we raise the annual subscription to £15 for Individual Membership and of £20 for Joint Membership. To be consistent with our Constitution, the Committee is also recommending that the increase and the new category should apply from 1st January 2025.

The reasons for proposing the increase in the subscription are these. We have always tried to ensure the subscriptions cover the cost of running the society. Those costs have increased and we expect them to continue to increase. The costs of providing the hybrid talks have been kept low, mainly by being able to borrow a second laptop, but that arrangement is not permanent. We are very fortunate to have an excellent venue in the Chiswick Memorial Club, but if our arrangement here had to end, covering the cost of other venues would significantly deplete our funds until the subscription could be raised. Inflation is diminishing the value of

our reserves and we have not generated sufficient surplus to compensate.

We also try to hold a Publications fund to both cover the costs of the Journal and to be able to support any new publication (such as the revised history of the Great West Road). The costs of producing the Journal are also increasing. Fewer members pick up their Journal at the AGM than before the lockdown, and we have a growing proportion of on-line members whose Journals will have to be posted, so postage and packing costs are greater than before. More organisations are trying to charge for the use of images, and those charges can be high. We have improved the quality of production, especially with the introduction of colour, general production costs are increasing, and we expect them to continue to increase.

Many subscriptions are now paid by standing orders, or through PayPal. Changing standing orders can be a tiresome task, and we are proposing an increase to £15/£20 in one step to reduce the administration of raising the subscription in smaller steps each year or two. For information, the subscription went up from £5 to £7 in 2004, and to £9 in 2007.

The Constitution specifies that this resolution requires a simple majority of votes at the AGM to be accepted.

Members are asked to agree to raising the subscription to £15/£20 p.a. from 1st January 2025.

8) Review of our constitution

Since its inception the Society has been an unincorporated association. It has always been a not-for-profit organisation. The members of the Committee are jointly and severally responsible for any debts. We publish and sell the Journal, and we buy relevant local history books to sell at our meetings and through the website, many of which are not stocked in bookshops. These arrangements are now presenting us with problems.

If we were to become a registered charity, and a company with liability limited by guarantee, we could overcome the problems such as personal liability for any debts. At present, the PayPal account is in the name of the Chair (as we do not exist in a form PayPal recognises) and charitable status would regularize this. It would also avoid the risk of a tax liability incurred from selling publications to non-members. The inspection of the accounts would remain the same.

The process would require further research and advice, and the drafting of a new Constitution, which would be considered either at a Special General Meeting or at the 2025 AGM.

Members are asked to approve the proposal that the Committee pursues the process of adapting our constitution in this way.