



Patron:

MRAF The Lord Craig of Radley GCB OBE MA DSc FRAeS

## **THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

### TITLE

1. The Society shall be known as 'The Royal Air Force Ornithological Society'.

### MISSION STATEMENT

2. To bring together, those members of the RAF, and others as permitted by the Constitution, who have an interest in wild birds, for the organisation of events and the collective studying, sharing and dissemination of ornithological experiences and scientific knowledge.

### AIMS

3. The Aims of the Society shall be:
  - a. To promote the systematic observation of bird life at locations home and abroad, particularly on RAF bases, and to advise and assist the Services and other organisations in survey work, local ringing schemes and ornithological field activities.
  - b. Encourage the development of novice ornithologists, through the activities of the Society (this includes circulating contact details of individuals to other members within the Society).
  - c. Raise awareness within the Royal Air Force of the importance of bird life to the environment, and to stimulate interest in the study and protection of birds and the conservation of the habitat on which they depend.
4. In order to meet these aims the Royal Air Force Ornithological Society will:
  - a. Mount regular Field Activities both in the UK and abroad.
  - b. Publish the bi-annual RAFOS 'Newsletter', containing reports and articles on the field activities of members. Publish, when required, an e-Journal of the reports of RAFOS scientific work undertaken. Articles contributed by members are to reflect the aims of the Constitution.
  - c. Build and maintain an archive and reference library, accessible to members, of all RAFOS-related activities.

- d. Hold an Annual General Meeting to debate and ratify decisions of the Committee and to share experiences of Society activities.
- e. Maintain a web-site to promote the aims and activities of the Society.
- f. Liaise with other Services societies and Defence Estates (Conservation).
- g. Liaise with regional, national and international ornithological organisations such as the Wildlife Trusts, the British Trust for Ornithology, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Birdlife International.

#### MEMBERSHIP

- 5. Ordinary Membership with full voting rights shall be automatically open to past and present members of the RAF and persons employed by or serving with the RAF or MoD and their dependants over 17 years of age. In addition, membership may be offered, subject to approval by the Committee, to applicants from outside the automatic group whose membership was likely to be of benefit to the Society.
- 6. Honorary Membership of the Society may be offered to persons who, in the opinion of the Committee, have rendered special service to the Society.
- 7. Family Membership with voting rights, (one vote per family if an Ordinary Member) may be offered to those individuals who would otherwise be a member in one of the above categories, but who wish to also include their spouse and dependants.
- 8. Individuals taking part in RAFOS activities are expected to be paid-up members of the Society or are to join as temporary members.

#### ELECTION OF MEMBERS

- 9. The names of all persons proposed by the Committee for Honorary Membership of the Society shall be submitted by the Secretary for confirmation by a majority vote at the AGM of the Society.
- 10. Any member may be expelled from the Society for conduct prejudicial to its good name by a majority vote at a meeting of the Committee and endorsed at the next AGM.

#### OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

- 11. The Officers of the Society shall be: President, Vice-Presidents, Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer.

#### COMMITTEE

- 12. The Committee shall be drawn from across the membership of the Society and is to consist of a maximum of 12 Members of whom the Officers of the Society should, when possible, be serving members of the Royal Air Force. If this is not possible, then at least one of the officers is to be a serving member.
- 13. Officers and members of the Committee shall be proposed and seconded by Ordinary Members of the Society for election at the AGM. Election shall be by a simple majority of votes cast.

14. The period of office shall normally be 3 years, after which there shall be a further election.

15. Policy decisions of the Committee shall be agreed by a majority of the elected Committee.

16. The quorum for the Committee is Chairman, Secretary and 3 other Members of the Committee with voting rights.

17. The Committee may fill temporary vacancies by co-option subject to the agreement of the majority of elected Committee Members. Co-opted Committee Members shall be confirmed in their appointment by a simple majority of votes cast at the next AGM.

#### SCIENTIFIC ADVISER

18. The Committee may invite a suitably qualified person of scientific standing and ornithological experience to act as Scientific Adviser to the Society. The Scientific Adviser may be invited to attend Committee Meetings, or other meetings, to advise on matters of scientific interest, but the position is ex-officio and without voting rights.

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

19. The AGM of the Society shall be held at a convenient time and location each year. Notice of the meeting shall be circulated to all members by the Secretary at least 6 weeks before the date of the Meeting. An agenda shall be circulated with the convening notice.

20. The attendance of 20% of full members of the Society shall be necessary to constitute a quorum at any General Meeting; otherwise the Meeting shall be adjourned.

21. Voting at the AGM may be in person, by proxy, or by postal vote. Proxy ballot forms may be obtained from the Secretary and are to be returned to him/her not later than 2 days before the meeting.

22. A meeting may be adjourned at any point in the proceedings by a majority vote of those present.

#### EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS

23. An extraordinary General Meeting may be called by the Committee or following a request from 12 Ordinary Members at any time to discuss important business. Notice of the General Meeting is to be circulated and the business is to be conducted in the manner required for an AGM and 20% of the full members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum.

#### AFFILIATED SOCIETIES

24. The Committee may approve affiliation to the Society by other ornithological societies, groups, clubs and natural history societies. Affiliation shall be based on mutual exchange of information such as Newsletters, Journals and Reports, and no subscription will be required.

25. Affiliation shall continue subject to an annual review by the Committee and for one year after the last receipt of information from an affiliated society.

26. The Secretary shall maintain a list of Affiliated Societies, together with contact details of their officials.

#### ACCOUNTS

27. Subscriptions. An Annual subscription shall be paid by all Members, except Honorary. The rates of subscription shall be agreed by members at the AGM and shall be due on the first day of January each year. The Membership Secretary shall circulate one Notice and one Reminder of subscription being due. If, after this, overdue subscriptions remain unpaid, the subject member will be considered to have resigned.

28. Financial Year. The Financial Year shall be from 1 September to 31 August following.

29. Audit of Accounts. The Books of Account of the Society are to be submitted for audit annually by the Treasurer. A Statement of Account and Balance Sheet shall be rendered to Members at the AGM.

#### Funding Principles and Priorities

30. Activities may attract RAFOS funds if they involve any of, or a combination of, the following principles which are listed in order of priority:

- a. Scientific bird study in support of a recognised project.
- b. Consultancy study and / or advice on behalf of the RAF, MOD or other governmental or environmental body.
- c. Field study aimed at the development of novice birders, youngsters and families in order to encourage an interest in birds and the environment, with or without accommodation charges.
- d. Other recreational bird watching with fellow RAFOS members or members of the other Services ornithological societies with or without accommodation charges.

#### Funding Guidance for the Committee

31. Using the above Funding Principles and Priorities, the Committee will propose funding using the following guidance. Although these are not mandatory, the Committee should be prepared to explain its reasoning to the AGM:

- a. Scientific work – up to a maximum of 40% of estimated costs.
- b. Consultancy work (presuming the expedition is in receipt of payment, sponsorship or other financial support) – up to a maximum of 20% of estimated costs.
- c. Novice development work including overnight accommodation costs – up to a maximum of 10% of estimated costs.

- d. Novice development work with no accommodation costs – nominal assistance with costs such as bird reserve entrance fees.
- e. Recreational birding including overnight accommodation costs – up to a maximum of 10% of estimated costs.
- f. Recreational birding with no accommodation costs – nominal assistance with costs but only on an exceptional basis.

32. All expedition leaders and organisers should present an estimate of costs and likely numbers of members attending when applying for RAFOS funding. Leaders should actively seek external sponsorship of their event. After the expedition, leaders are expected to submit a post-event report for publication in the Newsletter or the Journal.

33. The Treasurer will make payment of the RAFOS grant when the funds are required by the expedition leader (e.g. when initial booking payment falls due). Repeat activities may set up a bank account as this eases the transfer of funds and permits the transparent handling of sponsorship monies and personal contributions. A current bank statement and a full statement of income and expenditure are to be provided as part of the post expedition report to the Committee. All funds held in expedition bank accounts are normally to be considered the property of RAFOS, and should be returned to the RAFOS Treasurer when appropriate or when requested.

#### CHANGES IN CONSTITUTION

34. The Constitution will be reviewed annually by the Committee, just prior to the AGM. Proposals to amend the Constitution will be put to the Membership, and must be agreed by at least two-thirds of votes cast.

#### WINDING UP OF THE SOCIETY

35. Unless the exigencies of the Service dictate otherwise, the Society may only be wound up by a unanimous vote at a properly convened General Meeting. If the Society is wound up, any remaining property and cash shall be donated to some other ornithological enterprise agreed by Members at the Meeting.

Dated: 4 December 2011.