

Isfield and Little Horsted Bonfire Society CONSTITUTION, RULES & CODE OF CONDUCT

Version 5:



Version 5: June 2023

(Comprising revisions made in April 2022, July 2022, January 2023 and June 2023)

SECTION 1: Purpose

1.1 The Society exists for the following purposes:

- To organise a public, family-friendly Bonfire Night for the parishes of Isfield and Little Horsted
- To support the aims and traditions of Bonfire in Sussex
- To attend other societies' Bonfire nights as agreed
- To arrange various fund-raising events to facilitate the above aims
- To make suitable donations, as agreed by the Society each year, for the benefit of local charitable or other good causes.

1.2 In addition, the Society acts as a social group to offer members and their guests the opportunity to take part in non-Bonfire related activities from time to time.

1.3 The Society is comprised of Full and Junior Members who must satisfy the conditions of membership stated below. A Management Committee will be appointed, members of which will be elected each year at the Annual General Meeting.

SECTION 1: AGM ELECTION OF COMMITTEE POSITIONS

1.4 Nominations for all elected positions must be from the wider paid-up adult membership of the Society (including Life Members) ONLY. Any such nominations should be submitted no less than 14 days prior to the AGM. Nominations must be seconded by an existing paid-up adult Member.

1.5 Nominees are encouraged to make a short statement (either written or verbal) to support their nomination.

1.6 Nominations will be circulated to the Society at least 7 days prior to the AGM.

1.7 Should there be more than 1 candidate for any Committee position, a vote will be necessary. In such cases, any fully paid-up member who cannot attend the AGM will be entitled to vote. This may be done by either requesting an absent vote or assigning a proxy vote (someone nominated by the absent member to vote on their behalf).

1.8 An absent vote must be requested by email or text no later than 6pm on the day before the AGM and submitted to the Secretary no later than noon on the day of the AGM.

1.9 A proxy vote can be assigned by an absent voter to another member of the Society. This must be done by the absent member notifying the Secretary in writing (either by email or text) no later than 1 hour before the commencement of the AGM meeting.

1.10 If no nominations have been received in advance, Committee positions may be accepted from the floor, provided the candidate is present and there is a proposer and a seconder.

SECTION 2: Conditions of Membership

2.1 All Members must pay an annual membership fee, with the exception of Life Members. The renewal date for membership and the level of fee will be proposed by the Management Committee and subject to confirmation by majority vote at the Annual General Meeting.

2.2 New applicants should have a connection with the Society either through a residential or historical link to the parishes of Isfield or Little Horsted, a strong link to an existing member or at the Committee's discretion.

2.3 All members must complete an application form prior to joining the Society. On renewal of membership each year, members will be asked to confirm any changes to their details.

2.4 All Members must follow the Rules/Code of Conduct of the Society.

2.5 The Management Committee reserves the right to suspend, refuse or cancel membership to any individual deemed to have acted in breach of the Code of Conduct or in such a way as to bring the Society into disrepute. In any such case the right of appeal will apply.

2.6 Any decision to set a maximum membership limit (which may then result in a waiting list) will be determined by a majority vote at the Annual General Meeting.

SECTION 3: The Management Committee

3.1 The Management Committee shall be comprised of full, paid-up members of the Society that have been nominated, seconded and duly elected at the Annual General Meeting each year.

3.3 The Management Committee, subject to a quorum of any FIVE of its Members meeting together, can make any decision affecting day-to-day operation of the Society.

3.4 The following matters will be subject to ratification by the general membership at a General Meeting:

- Any changes to the Rules, Code of Conduct, or Constitution of the Society
- Any changes that alter the usual content, format and programme of our annual Bonfire event as described in Appendix A, including cancellation of our event
- Decisions relating to charitable donations to be given by the Society

3.5 In these cases, decisions made by the Committee will be put to a General Meeting as soon as is practically possible, and within 3 months, but the Committee reserves the right to apply proposed changes with immediate effect and where it is prudent to do so.

3.6 The general membership will be able to vote on which out-meetings we attend. 3.7 Members of the Management Committee unable to attend Committee meetings may appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf.

3.8 Decisions made by the Management Committee will be carried by a simple show of hands. The Chair will not vote but will hold a casting vote in the event of a tie.

3.9 The minutes of Management Committee meetings will be distributed to all Full Members.

SECTION 4: General Meetings

4.1 The Annual General Meeting will be held in January or February each year, at a suitable venue.

4.2 The quorum for General Meetings shall comprise of no less than 15 paid up members of the Society. Decisions at inquorate meetings will be referred to/ratified at the next General Meeting (if practical to do so).

4.3 No fewer than FOUR General Meetings shall be called over the course of the year unless exceptional circumstances determine otherwise.

4.4 Further general meetings may be called at any time by the Management Committee where any issues require ratification by the general membership.

4.5 If any member not on the Management Committee believes that an additional General Meeting is necessary for a specific purpose, they should at first approach the Management Committee to request a General Meeting be called. If the Management Committee does not agree, then a written request from no fewer than FIVE general members must be made to trigger such a meeting.

4.6 Motions in General Meetings may only be proposed and seconded by paid-up members (excluding the Chair or their nominated deputy). Once any proposal has been seconded then a vote will be held. A simple majority is necessary to carry any motion, with the Chair (or in their absence the nominated deputy) holding the casting vote.

4.7 The use of a secret ballot will ONLY apply in the following circumstances:

1) At the Annual General Meeting where elected positions on the Management Committee are contested;

2) At General Meetings where the Chair (or their nominated Deputy) proposes that the matter be put to the vote in this way, and this proposal is seconded.

APPENDIX A

The content, format and programme of our annual bonfire event shall normally comprise the following, subject to logistics, funding or legal issues:

- A single bonfire in the parish of Isfield
- A procession through the village comprising ILHBS and between 50 and a maximum of 250 invited participants from local bonfire societies and up to 3 bonfire bands
- Free access to the public (at the present time)
- Lit torches for all societies participating in the procession
- An aerial firework display
- An effigy and/or tableau (whether static or mobile), including suitable pyro
- Bonfire prayers and poppies for remembrance
- A fire-site collection, with proceeds going to ILHBS
- Food and other refreshments to be made available for all

Isfield and Little Horsted Bonfire Society THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Management Committee

The Management Committee is to be elected each year at the Annual General Meeting

The current Committee roles are:

- Chairperson
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Safety Co-ordinator
 - Commander in Chief
 - Fund-Raising and Social Co-ordinator
 - Isfest Co-ordinator
 - Captain of Pyrotechnics
 - Membership Co-ordinator
- The Chairperson may, at their discretion, nominate a Vice- Chairperson from the Committee to deputise for them in the event of their absence from any meeting.

Roles of the Management Committee

Chairperson

- To manage all meetings of the Society, and ensure that other members of the Management Committee are given the necessary support by others to carry out their roles.
- To support the membership and mediate any issues.

Secretary

- To attend committee and general meetings (approx. 17 meetings each year)
- To prepare and circulate agendas and minutes for committee, general and annual meetings
- To supply information for publication on the Society's website and for the purpose of communication with the wider Society
- To ensure the Society has appropriate insurance cover throughout the year
- To actively monitor the Society's email account and deal with sundry emails and other correspondence throughout the year as appropriate including in consultation with the wider Committee

Treasurer

- To keep proper records of all items of income and expenditure
- To manage the Society's Bank Account
- To report financial statements regularly to members
- To prepare an Annual Balance Sheet for presentation at the Annual General Meeting.
- To manage the weekly '59 Club' including the weekly draw and payment of any winnings.

Safety Co-ordinator

- To coordinate and train a team of volunteers and ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to identify, assess and manage the safety arrangements for the Society's annual bonfire event and associated fund-raising events;
- To liaise with the Secretary regarding any specific requirements of the Society's insurance policy;
- To carry out appropriate risk assessments on behalf of the Society.

Commander in Chief

- Ensure that all arrangements are in place for the closure of roads as agreed by the Committee and approved by the Local Authority (including ensuring signs and road cones are available and distributed in good time);
- Liaise with the Safety Team regarding all necessary risk assessments and agreed management plans to ensure the safety of members', contractors and the general public at the Society's annual bonfire night;
- Alongside other nominated representatives from the Society, to act as the primary liaison with the local Safety Advisory Group and ensure any legal requirements, recommendations or issues affecting the Society's annual bonfire event are reported to the Committee;
- Liaise with the Safety Officer and others to ensure appropriate training is given to all marshals involved in the smooth running of the street procession;
- Liaise with others, including Captains of Torches, Banners, and Bands, to ensure that all relevant safety measures for the procession are carried out including the safe lifting of the road closure; furthermore to co-ordinate the production of an event programme for distribution amongst the Society's membership, any visiting societies and the local community;
- Liaise with the Captains of Firesite, Bonfire and Pyrotechnics regarding plans for the safe operation of the bonfire and related firesite activities and handover the safe running of the bonfire event after the procession has returned to the Bonfire Society Headquarters;
- To liaise with the BONCO rep to ensure that any key issues arising from Sussex Bonfire Council meetings are reported to the Committee and any decisions taken by the Committee are implemented in a timely manner.

Fund-raising and Social Events Coordinator

- To plan and organise Bonfire Society fund-raising and social events throughout the year;
- To actively seek ideas and support from Bonfire Society event volunteers and co-ordinate their activities.

Isfest Co-ordinator

- To co-ordinate a team of volunteers to help plan and organise the annual music event, ensuring that all logistics are in place for a safe and successful fund-raising event.

Captain of Pyrotechnics

- To work closely with the Society's preferred pyrotechnics supplier on the design and execution of the Society's annual aerial firework display;
- To liaise with the CinC, Safety Officer and relevant Captains regarding the specific pyrotechnic requirements for the Society's annual bonfire event;
- To arrange the ordering and purchasing of pyrotechnic materials through the Society's preferred supplier within the approved budget and other requirements as agreed by the Committee/Society;
- To contribute as necessary to the safety risk assessments and management plans in respect of pyrotechnics, taking into account any relevant safety standards;
- To ensure the safe storage of all combustible materials held by the Society.

Membership Co-ordinator

- To receive membership applications, maintain a list of Bonfire Society Members and be responsible for the security of any personal data held;
- To report membership applications to the Committee for consideration;
- To be a point of contact for any ILHBS member wishing to raise individual concerns or queries regarding Bonfire Society business.

All Committee Members may at their discretion appoint other members of the Society to help them. Any such appointees should be notified to the Committee for information.

Isfield and Little Horsted Bonfire Society

RULES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

All members of ILHBS are representatives of the Society and our local village community. When marching with ILHBS, please ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone, both within ILHBS and in other societies and please respect the traditions of Sussex bonfire. The following Rules and Code of Conduct should be read alongside any other related safety information issued by the Committee.

RULES

1. Only fully paid-up members of the Society will be able to participate in Bonfire events.
2. If a member is deemed by the Management Committee to have breached the code of conduct
 1. Committee should approach the member verbally to discuss the issue
 2. If not resolved the Management Committee should conduct an investigation, collect any facts and talk to any witnesses to the event
 3. Formal discussion with the member to discuss the facts and the member given the opportunity to put their version of events forward
 4. The Management Committee will deliberate and make their decision. A statement will be issued to the member confirming the decision and what sanction (if any) they have deemed necessary.

The actions could be:

 - a. No issue or sanction
 - b. Formal written warning
 - c. Suspension of the member for a period of time
 - d. Permanent expulsion from the society
 5. If the member is expelled or suspended, the Society Membership will be informed of that decision.
3. If the member wishes to Appeal:
 1. A written appeal must be sent to the Secretary within 21 days of the formal letter
 2. The member must have at least 2 named supporters
 3. A committee member will meet with the member and/or their representative and agree on a list of adult members that would form a five-person appeal review panel. This list should **not** include:
 - a. Members of the committee involved in the decision
 - b. The member's 2 named supporters
 - c. A partner or direct relative of the member
 - d. Any person that is directly involved in the incident or is a witness
 - e. Any member that both parties agree should not be included (i.e. a person that is known not to be available)
 4. The committee should promptly set a hearing date as agreed between themselves and the member.
 5. The list of names will then be ordered randomly and first five contacted to confirm if they are happy to sit on this panel. If they cannot then the next name is contacted.
 6. A maximum of **two** witnesses (eligible for each party) may attend the appeal meeting.

The Appeal Process

The Appeal panel should hear:

1. The case against the member should be presented by no more than two committee members who were involved in the original decision.
2. The member or their representative will then present their case.
3. Witnesses may be called by either party.
4. **Only** the panel can ask questions from either side.
5. The Panel deliberates and can either confirm or change the level of the sanction given. In the event of a change to the level of sanction, the panel should communicate its decision and reasons to the general membership

Code of Conduct for ILHBS Bonfire Events

- Any member wishing to join in any bonfire society procession **MUST** be wearing suitable clothing. This will comprise sturdy footwear and appropriate bonfire costume: EITHER smugglers costume (white trousers, ILHBS approved red/green striped jumper and ILHBS bandanna) (black top hats with bandanna trim are also an option) OR other ILHBS approved costume, currently this is based on a Persian theme. [Other costume ideas should be presented to the wider Society at a General Meeting and agreed before being introduced].
- All costume worn **MUST** be made from flame retardant/resistant material such as cotton, wool, linen, leather, hessian etc.
- Junior members (under 16) must be accompanied by a responsible adult.
- Members must follow all instructions issued by the ILHBS committee and/or others appointed by them (e.g marshals)
- Only ILHBS members or members of other societies in uniform may carry torches. Torches carried by Junior Members is at the discretion and under the direct supervision of their responsible adult. Any member who behaves in such a way as to cause a safety concern to any other member will be asked to stop and may be asked to leave the procession by an ILHBS marshal or a Committee member.
- **NO** drop-down fireworks, boom-boxes or flares are allowed during the procession or in any part of the field accessible by the general public.
- **NO** food or drink should be consumed by members during the procession.
- All members take part in ILHBS activities at their own risk.

Code of Conduct for Outmeetings

In addition to the above, members must also have regard to the following:

- Members must follow all instructions from officers or delegates of the host society.
- Any rules relating to Junior Members set by the host society will take precedence.
- Members must abide by the rules regarding use of bangers, flares, and boom-boxes laid down by the host society.
- Food or drink may be consumed during recognised breaks or delays in processions, but never whilst the procession is in progress.

Complaints about Conduct of ILHBS Members

Any concerns or complaints about the conduct of an ILHBS Member should be directed to the Chair and/or Secretary in the first instance. The Committee will investigate as appropriate and decide on the most appropriate course of action.