

# Dorset Humanists Constitution

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2021 AGM  
proposed  
changes in red

## 1. Name

The name of the association is Dorset Humanists.

## 2. Aims

- i. To promote Humanism understood as a non-religious ethical worldview
- ii. To develop, and serve the needs of, the Humanist community in Dorset
- iii. To promote the public understanding of science
- iv. To be a force for good in our local community and globally
- v. To support the work of our partners

## 3. Partnership and affiliations

Dorset Humanists is a Partner of Humanists UK based at 39 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB as detailed in the Humanists UK Partnership Agreement signed by David Warden (Chair of Dorset Humanists) on July 26, 2019. Dorset Humanists is also an affiliated group of the National Secular Society, an associate member of Humanists International, and a participating group in the South Central England Humanists Network. Dorset Humanists' Constitution takes precedence over any partnership agreements.

## 4. Membership

Membership is by annual subscription, the rate of which is agreed at the Annual General Meeting, and is open to anyone supporting the aims and Partnership arrangements of Dorset Humanists and agreeing to abide by its constitution. Potential members referred from Humanists UK are eligible for free membership for one year. Members who have not paid their subscription are not permitted to vote at any Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). The committee may suspend or revoke the membership of any person who does not support the aims and Partnership arrangements of Dorset Humanists or whose conduct brings Dorset Humanists or Humanists UK into disrepute. The member concerned may appeal at the next AGM or EGM.

## 5. Committee

The affairs of Dorset Humanists shall be managed by a committee elected at the Annual General Meeting. It shall consist of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer (the Officers) and not more than eight other members. The committee will meet at least quarterly. A quorum for a Committee meeting shall be five members including at least one of the Officers. In the absence of the Chair the Vice-Chair or one of the Officers will take charge of committee meetings. Any major new proposals shall be discussed by the Committee, published in the next Bulletin, and then brought to the next AGM or EGM for a decision by majority vote of the members present and any postal/electronic votes received before the meeting. Any committee vacancy may be filled by co-option of a member of Dorset Humanists for the remaining part of the year prior to the next AGM.

## 6. Annual General Meeting

An Annual General Meeting shall be held **in person or online** in March each year to consider reports from the officers, approve the accounts, elect a new Committee, review subscriptions for the coming year and conduct any other business. All members must be given at least 21 days' notice of the date, time and place of the AGM or any EGM. A quorum for conducting business at the AGM or EGM shall be twenty members.

Nominations for the committee must be received by the Secretary no later than the end of February. Nomination forms are available for this purpose. If the number of committee nominations is equal to or less than **twelve** then the entire list is presented to the membership for a block vote. If the number of committee nominations exceeds **twelve** then ballot papers will be presented to the members with brief statements about each candidate. Arrangements should be made by the Secretary to count the votes immediately. Candidates with the lowest number of votes are eliminated.

A separate election is then held for the office of Chair. Candidates for the position of Chair must have served on the committee for at least one year. If more than one nomination for the office of Chair has been received the candidates will have the opportunity to speak for no more than 5 minutes in support of their nomination.

Formal motions for debate at the AGM must be submitted to the Secretary, preferably no later than the end of December so that they can be published in the January Bulletin and discussed at the January meeting. Formal motions must be proposed and seconded at the AGM.

An Extraordinary General Meeting can be called either by the committee or by any six members, one of whom will be the proposer with the other five supporting the proposal. For such a meeting to proceed there must be a quorum of twenty members in attendance **in person or online**.

## 7. Finance

General financial policy shall be determined at the AGM. The funds of Dorset Humanists shall be managed, in accordance with this policy, by the Committee, who shall have the power to invest any sums not required for immediate expenditure. **The committee has the power at its discretion to reimburse members, including committee members, for expenses incurred and to pay members for professional services.** The accounting year of Dorset Humanists shall run from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December and accounts for the year shall be presented to members at the following AGM for endorsement. The Treasurer's task is to manage the finances by keeping books and up-to-date accounts, preparing annual accounts and controlling expenditure, **and arranging for informal audit in the period between 31<sup>st</sup> December and the AGM.**

## 8. Winding up of Dorset Humanists

A decision to wind up Dorset Humanists or to amalgamate with another organisation may be taken only at a General Meeting when at least 21 days' advance notice of the proposal to do so has been given to all members. On winding up, the assets of Dorset Humanists, after payment of any outstanding debts and commitments, shall be transferred to Humanists UK or another organisation with similar aims.

## 9. Altering the Constitution

The Constitution is the basis on which members join Dorset Humanists. Once agreed by the membership it becomes binding unless specific clauses are changed and agreed by a majority greater than two thirds of the members present at an AGM or EGM.