



Registered Charity (No.1087748); Registered Company (No. 4191740)

# **SOCIETY HANDBOOK**

This handbook is a guide to our services and facilities for both new and existing members. It is available in hard copy on request.

Names, email addresses and telephone numbers of Officers, Co-ordinators and other Representatives of the Society are listed in our journal 'Suffolk Roots'. They are also shown on our website: [www.suffolkfhs.org.uk](http://www.suffolkfhs.org.uk)

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# **SOCIETY HISTORY AND STRUCTURE**

## **Introduction**

The Society was founded at Lowestoft in 1975. We are a group of keen amateur genealogists whose objectives are to promote and encourage, with particular reference to Suffolk, the study of family history, genealogy, heraldry and local history; and to promote the preservation, security and accessibility of archive material.

The Society is a registered charitable company run by member-elected Trustees, together with the support of Honorary Members and other volunteers.

The Society is a member of the Family History Federation – a national charitable organisation comprising most British and some overseas family history societies, plus societies with genealogical purposes. The Federation represents its member societies to official organisations on matters affecting the study of family history, the availability of records and other kindred topics; and liaises with Government bodies and archives.

## **Company Status**

In 2001, the Society registered as a “Private Limited Company by Guarantee”, with our Trustees as directors. There are no shareholders. All the Society’s members are technically the owners, although as the Society is also a registered charity all assets must be used towards our charitable purpose of education and furtherance of family history activity.

If the Society is wound up, any remaining assets must be put towards this charitable purpose – not distributed to member-owners.

The “Private Limited Company Guarantee” referred to above means that in the highly unlikely event of the Society closing with debts, each member-owner “guarantees” a maximum sum of £1 towards meeting them. This is a legal technicality as any collection and processing costs would need to be balanced against this, making the exercise unrealistic.

However, this type of company status gives us administrative benefits and advantages, and is widely used by many charities and societies. We are legally required to file our accounts annually with Companies House (a Government department). A summary of these, together with our Trustees’ details are publicly listed under “Companies House” on the UK Government’s website at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

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# MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICES

## Membership

Membership of the Society is open to all who wish to further their interests in family history, genealogy, heraldry and local history with particular reference to Suffolk.

The membership year runs from the 1st April to 31st March. Current subscription rates are listed in our journal 'Suffolk Roots' and on our website. These can also be obtained, along with application forms and further details, from the Membership Secretary (email [membership@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:membership@suffolkfhs.org.uk))

## Members' Interests

On joining the Society you will be invited to submit a list of your surname name interests which will be displayed on the Society's website. This enables members with the same interests to contact each other.

Personal email and postal addresses are not displayed. Messages are forwarded automatically by our website, leaving any exchange of personal contact details to members' mutual agreement. Letters will be forwarded by the Membership Secretary. Only members can enter their interests, but anyone can search the database.

For the service to work efficiently, Members need to inform the Membership Secretary of any change to their postal or email addresses, and surname interests.

## "Suffolk Roots" – The Society Journal.

*Suffolk Roots* is free to members and published quarterly, in March, June, September and December. It contains news, articles, letters, important snippets of information and much more contributed by our members and officers, plus others with relevant material to offer.

We also have "exchange journal" arrangements with a number of other Family History Societies and genealogical organisations to enable each other's journal to be accessed on-line by their members.

The editorial team always welcomes articles to print. These can be submitted by anyone, and should be of interest to local or family historians.

Please send articles to:- [editor@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:editor@suffolkfhs.org.uk)

## Groups

We have five Suffolk based groups which meet monthly at Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Ipswich, Lowestoft and Sudbury; plus our West of London group, which meets three times a year at Hillingdon.

A warm welcome awaits you at any of our group meetings. Each Suffolk based group organises its own programme of talks, walks, open days, events and research.

The West of London meetings include a speaker, but otherwise are more research based. All the Society's CDs, plus books and other material is available to help local members for whom short visits to the Suffolk record offices is difficult.

Advice on genealogy generally, as well on Suffolk research is always available at any group meeting. Details of current programmes and group representatives are available in *Suffolk Roots* and on our website. A small contribution is requested at meetings to help towards its overheads.

### **Come and Meet Us**

We attend a variety of events across the country to help bring Suffolk closer to members and indeed anyone with Suffolk interests who live outside the county.

Do come and introduce yourself when we visit your area. Details of forthcoming events are available in *Suffolk Roots* and on our website. If any member is prepared to assist on our stand, please contact the Membership Secretary at [membership@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:membership@suffolkfhs.org.uk).

As yet, unfortunately we are unable to attend overseas events.

### **Projects and Publications**

Members of the Society undertake transcribing and indexing of Suffolk's historic records. This helps to preserve their information, and simplifies identification of entries sought.

The majority of our indexes are published as CDs and downloads, and are available to anyone through our on-line shop, with a discount for members. New indexes are published as transcription batches are completed.

Currently we are working on Parish Register entries of marriages and baptisms (burial entries for the whole county are complete). Other registers, eg workhouse records, will follow. Our shop listings give full details for each CD of material, individual parishes and areas covered. They can be ordered by post from our Publications Officer, Jean Licence 60 Oldfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP8 3SE, or by emailing [publications@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:publications@suffolkfhs.org.uk).

We are also increasing the number of projects published on-line through our Members' Area. Our out of print book publications are currently being digitised and added. Monumental Inscriptions are an ongoing project, and some group members can be found on sunny afternoons recording gravestone inscriptions before they vanish.

Volunteers for transcribing and checking are always needed, especially in the Suffolk Record Offices which hold the original registers. For those working at home, copies of parish register pages on microfiche are provided by the Society together with full instructions. It is interesting work, so if you would like to help or want to know more please contact the appropriate co-ordinator (details in *Suffolk Roots*).

## **Search Services**

We provide a Search Service of our published indexes and monumental inscriptions, including any new material awaiting publication. Full details are shown on our website – look under the “Resources” tab, then “Search Services”

## **Library**

The Society’s library is held, mainly on open display, at Suffolk Archives at The Hold at 131 Fore St Ipswich IP4 1LE. It contains many books, both on Suffolk and family history in general. They are available for use in the library only, and arranged in three collections: Family Histories, Transcripts, and Books. To check opening times and any necessary appointment details see [www.suffolkarchives.co.uk](http://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk). Contact [archives@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:archives@suffolk.gov.uk).

Members are also invited to complete an Ancestral Chart and forward it to our Librarian, at [librarian@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:librarian@suffolkfhs.org.uk) who will then file it for reference in the Society Library. You can update this as necessary. Charts are available on our website to download and print.

Librarian, Jean Licence 60 Oldfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP8 3SE.

## **APPENDICES**

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# APPENDIX 1: PRIVACY POLICY

## Introduction

Our Privacy Policy explains what information we collect, how we use it, and your choices regarding your personal data. In the following, the term “Society” refers to the Suffolk Family History Society.

Our Privacy Policy is designed to comply with the terms of the General Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)

## Members’ Data

To administer the Society and provide members’ services we need certain data:-

- As a minimum members’ names and postal addresses. For those electing electronic membership we also need an e-mail address. These are to provide members with information and our quarterly “Suffolk Roots” journal.
- For those wishing to use the website members’ area we need their email address to verify membership.
- We also send out newsletters and information by e-mail regarding events such as Zoom presentations or forthcoming meetings.

## Controlling personal information

- We will not distribute any member’s personal information to third parties unless we are required by law to do so.
- Members may request details of the personal information we hold about them by contacting our Membership Secretary: Mr D Horton, 26 The Crescent, Slough, Berks, SL1 2LQ. Email: [membership@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:membership@suffolkfhs.org.uk). We will only provide such information to the address/email that we hold on file for that member. Please advise the Membership Secretary regarding any errors or omissions, when any necessary corrections will be promptly made.
- Personal contact details of those submitting surname interests are not published. Surname interest messages are automatically forwarded via our website, and letters will be forwarded by the Membership Secretary. It is for participants themselves to mutually agree when or if to exchange their contact details.

We have physical, electronic and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure the information we hold. These include for example, limiting access to members’ data to only those officers with a bona fide reason for access.

- The legal contract with our website manager requires that all processing of confidential information and personal data will be managed in full compliance with the UK data protection legislation currently in force. We hold full comprehensive insurance which will indemnify the Society against any costs resulting from any breach of current Data Protection legislation.

### **Links to other websites**

Our website includes links to relevant external websites which are not controlled by the Society. Whilst we take all reasonable care in selecting and providing these links, you are advised to exercise caution before clicking any of them. We cannot be held responsible for any adverse consequences caused by your use of them.

### **Changes to this Privacy Policy**

We may change this Privacy Policy occasionally. Any changes will be posted on this page and in the next available Suffolk Roots. If you continue to access the website or use its services after those changes have become effective, you will be assumed to have agreed to the revised policy.

If you have any questions about this Privacy Policy, would like to exercise any of your statutory rights, or to make a complaint, please contact the Membership Secretary mentioned above.

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# **APPENDIX 2: SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

## **UK LEGAL DEFINITION**

“Safeguarding” means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

## **POLICY PURPOSE**

- To reflect statutory responsibilities, government guidance, and comply with best practice as outlined by Suffolk County Council.
- To create a safe and welcoming environment where everyone is respected and valued.
- To ensure that the Society is run so as to actively prevent harm, harassment, bullying, abuse and neglect.
- To enable concerns to be raised easily, and that we respond correctly and confidentially in a timely and appropriate manner to any concerns raised.

## **PRACTICAL MEASURES**

- The Society’s designated Safeguarding Officer holds our full Policy Document which contains detailed explanations of types of unacceptable treatment of others, guidance on dealing with different types of incident, and the correct forms to record incidents and where necessary to report to the appropriate authorities.
- Information relating to an issue and its subsequent management will be kept confidential and secure. It will be shared only on a strict “need to know” basis.
- Our online administrators (Website, Social Media Facebook etc) will monitor these for cyber-bullying, and other forms of misuse.
- The Society’s Safeguarding Officer will be immediately informed if any safeguarding issue arises, and will deal with matters involving no other organisation.
- On occasions when Society members work with adults or children in colleges, schools, libraries, clubs etc we will immediately liaise with such organisation’s own safeguarding staff/officers to deal with any concerns arising.
- The Society will liaise with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership ([suffolksp.org.uk](http://suffolksp.org.uk)), to support the police, local authority and other official bodies in any subsequent investigations.

## **PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Occasionally, DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearance may be required to enable Society members to participate in a community event. Our Safeguarding Officer will advise members in these instances.

Our Safeguarding Officer can be contacted at [safeguarding@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@suffolkfhs.org.uk).

The MASH reporting helpline is 0808 8004005.  
For urgent matters call 999

Our Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed by the Trustees at least annually.

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# **APPENDIX 3: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

## **POLICY PURPOSE**

- To comply with our legal responsibilities to ensure that the Society is run so as to actively prevent discrimination against anyone due to their age, disability, race, religion, marital status, gender or sexual orientation.

To enable concerns to be raised easily, and that we respond correctly and confidentially in a timely and appropriate manner to any concerns raised.

## **PRACTICAL MEASURES**

- The Society aims to offer events and activities designed to appeal to a wide variety of members, and we welcome ideas and suggestions to further this aim.
- Wherever possible, our meetings and events are held in venues that are wheelchair accessible, and at larger events the Society endeavours to ensure that a PA system and hearing loop are available, and that visually impaired people can manoeuvre safely.
- Free places are granted to members for a necessary carer to enable them to attend outings and events.
- Information relating to an issue and its subsequent management will be kept confidential and secure. It will be shared only on a strict “need to know” basis.
- Our online administrators (Website, Social Media, Facebook etc) will monitor these for forms of discriminatory comment and abuse.
- The Trustees will be immediately informed if any discriminatory issue arises, and will promptly deal with the matter under the Society’s Disciplinary Procedure detailed in Appendix 7 on page 21 of this Handbook.
- Where an outside organisation is involved the Trustees will liaise with the appropriate officers and management to resolve the issue.

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# APPENDIX 4: MEMBERS' PROTOCOL

## DEFINITION

A member is a person who has completed a form of application for membership and has paid the appropriate subscription.

## CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

- The Society's membership year runs from the 1st April to the 31st March.
- Joint Membership is available to include two persons each with a vote, but with one copy of "*Suffolk Roots*".
- Membership is not transferable.
- Membership of the Society is not an entitlement and should not be regarded as a right.
- The Trustees reserve the right to deny or revoke membership to any person.

## WIDER PARTICIPATION IN THE SOCIETY

Members have many opportunities for wider involvement in the Society. This can help members to meet and work with other members, gain experience and pursue their own spheres of interest, whilst bringing knowledge of Suffolk's history and its people into the public domain.

Opportunities include but are not restricted to:-

- Helping with transcribing and indexing records for our CDs and downloads – this can be either in a Record Office or remotely.
- Helping with noting, indexing and listing inscriptions on memorials and buildings such as gravestones, churches, etc.
- Proposing and implementing ideas for relevant projects.
- Setting up and running a local group either in Suffolk or elsewhere.
- Helping on our fair stands at various events around the country.
- Helping with Society administration (committees, the website, etc).
- Becoming a Trustee. (Unfortunately we cannot accept an undischarged bankrupt member for this position, nor as a treasurer, cheque signatory, or budget holder).

## DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

These are addressed fully in Appendix 7

## **TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

A member shall cease to be a member of the Society: -

- By giving notice in writing to the Society to resign his/her membership.
- When his/her subscription remains overdue on 01<sup>st</sup> May –ie one month from the 1<sup>st</sup> April renewal date.
- 
- Upon a member's representative notifying the Society of the member's death or inability to continue.
- If the Trustees, after going through the current relevant procedures and giving due consideration, decide that it is in the Society's interests that a member be removed. This includes refusing membership renewal by returning their subscription received by post, or re-crediting a standing order, bank transfer, or card payment.

## **TERMINATED MEMBERS**

A member who has previously resigned, or whose subscription has lapsed may re-join at any time, but could be allocated a new membership number.

A member whose membership was terminated by the Trustees can, after one year, apply in writing to be re considered for membership. The applicant will be invited to a meeting with a Committee specially convened by the Trustees to consider the matter.

The Committee may, after consideration:-

- Reinstatement the person
- Reinstatement the person with conditions attached
- Refuse to reinstate the person.

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# APPENDIX 5: GROUPS PROTOCOL

## GROUP DEFINITION

A Group comprises a number of Society members who come together to pursue a common interest within the activities of the Society, and who have been recommended for Group Status by the Trustees.

Groups are geographically based depending upon the response of Society members in an area. They can be within Suffolk itself, or out of county either in the UK or overseas.

Activities depend on local circumstances but can include regular meetings (live, remote or hybrid depending on location and circumstances), talks, visits to record offices and places of interest, research sessions, projects etc:

Good practice suggests that a Group holds at least one research session annually.

Any Society member is entitled to partake in any group activity.

To assist any members considering forming a Group, the Membership Secretary can advise on approximate membership numbers in their area.

## GROUP FINANCES

- Each group will be self-financing with the aid of an annual Society grant. The Society may also provide equipment and software, and in the case of financial difficulty, additional short term funding.
- Group assets and money in group funds are the property of the Society.
- Any group holding funds in excess of £150 shall keep them in a bank or building society account of its choice. Such account shall be in the name of the “Suffolk Family History Society *xxx name* Group”.
- A Group Chair cannot simultaneously serve as that Group’s Treasurer
- Two signatories are required to withdraw money from any Group account. An undischarged bankrupt member cannot be Group Treasurer or a signatory.
- Groups’ accounts shall be amalgamated into the Society’s annual financial statement,
- A Group’s financial year shall match that of the Society..
- Groups shall maintain an assets register.

## GROUP ORGANISATION

- Groups shall be run in accordance with good democratic principles.

- Their annual general meeting quorum shall be 5 members.
- Their Committee shall be elected annually from their members, and comprise a minimum of three.
- The Committee quorum shall be three.
- The Society's Secretary must be informed of the composition of the Group's Committee as soon as is reasonably possible after its election.
- A Society member may serve on more than one Group Committee.
- A Group shall maintain a meeting attendance register which also lists whether an attendee is or is not a Society member..
- A Group must keep its published Society information up to date by:
  - a) Advising the *Suffolk Roots* Editor of its programme details sufficiently in advance to ensure that meeting and event details are published at the latest in the edition prior to the meeting/event.
  - b) Keeping their Society webpage up to date, or by providing the webmaster with their programme details, and information of any changes.
- A Group may be wound up by a majority resolution of the Group's members, or by the Trustees following discussion.

The Trustees will arrange occasional semi-formal meetings with Groups to which each Group can elect two non-Trustee representatives to attend.

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# **APPENDIX 6**

## **GENERAL MEETING PROCEDURE**

### **STATUS**

In any apparent conflict between the Society's Memorandum and Articles of Association and these Rules, the Memorandum and Articles of Association take precedence.

### **DEFINITIONS**

In these Rules:

- "Company" means Suffolk Family History Society.
- "Meeting" means the Annual General Meeting of members of the Society.
- "Member" means any Member of the Society.
- "Proxy" means the appointed representative of a Member.
- "Secretary" means the Society's Company Secretary.

Words indicating the singular include the plural and vice versa, unless stated otherwise.

### **CALLING OF MEETINGS**

Annual General Meetings are held during the autumn.

Additional General Meetings may be convened by the Trustees, or at the request of Members acting under the Companies Act 2006.

### **CALLING NOTICE**

All Members (including honorary), and the current Patron, are entitled to receive notice of General Meetings and to attend and participate.

The Trustees will provide a written report to the Secretary for enclosure with the calling notice.

Each meeting's date and venue, together with the agenda, reports, draft minutes of the previous meeting and all other relevant papers will be published no later than is necessary for their inclusion in the "Suffolk Roots" edition prior to the meeting.

The information will also be published at least a month in advance on the Society's website.

In the event of the meeting being on-line or hybrid, details of how to participate will also be published as above.

### **RECEIPT OF NOTICE**

Non-receipt of such notice shall not affect the validity of the Meeting.



## **BUSINESS AND AGENDA**

The Chair of the Trustees, or a substitute delegated by the Chair, shall chair the Meeting.

The agenda shall always include the following:-

- Announcement of apologies for absence.
- Approval for the Minutes of the previous meeting.
- Matters arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the Agenda.
- Updates to the previously circulated reports referred to under “Calling Notice”.
- Resolutions submitted in advance, properly proposed and seconded under the Rules

The remaining order of business shall be as per the prior published Agenda, which the Chair can vary as necessary during the meeting.

The Chair shall also have discretion to allow the discussion of urgent matters and votes on motions not specified in the agenda provided they are within the meeting's competence.

## **QUORUM**

Twenty-five members, or their properly appointed proxies.

## **MINUTES AND DOCUMENTS**

- Minutes of Meetings shall be made, and kept by the Secretary.
- An attendance record will be kept, recording also those apologising for absence.
- A copy of all reports and documents considered by the Meeting shall be kept with the minutes.
- A copy of the draft minutes shall be circulated before the next meeting, where, subject to any amendments for accuracy, they shall be submitted for approval. Immediately following approval they shall be signed and dated by the Chair.

## **CONDUCT**

- Non-members may be permitted entry at the Chair's discretion, but will not have voting rights.
- Members wishing to speak will raise their hand, or if attending on-line use the appropriate signal. When invited to address the meeting they will do so through the Chair. Where present in person, if possible they should stand so as to be more easily heard.
- Members shall keep their speeches relevant to the question or motion being debated.
- While a member is speaking the other members shall remain quiet, unless raising a point of order, or in a personal explanation.

- If the Chair rises during the meeting anyone speaking will then stop. No other speeches shall be made until the Chair formally continues proceedings.
- If the Chair's authority is disregarded, the vacating of the Chair by him/her shall cause the meeting to be adjourned.

## **POINTS OF ORDER AND PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS**

- A Point of Order can relate only to an alleged breach of the Articles of Association, Rules or a point of procedure.
- A member may rise on a point of order and shall be entitled to be heard immediately. The member shall then specify the relevant Article, Rule or point of procedure and the way in which the member considers it has been broken.
- A Personal Explanation can only relate to some material part of a former speech by the member and which appears to have been misunderstood in the current debate.
- A member may rise in personal explanation and shall be entitled to be heard immediately.
- The ruling of the Chair upon a point of order, or admissibility of a personal explanation shall be final. Further discussion will only be permitted if the Chair's ruling is challenged by at least 10 Members, and at least two thirds of the Members present then vote against the ruling.

## **MOTIONS**

To be discussed or voted upon, all motions except those moved by the Chair must be properly proposed and seconded.

They must then be submitted in writing to The Secretary by the deadline date for the journal which is to publish the calling notice.

A motion's proposer shall be allowed a 5 minute speech, and any others including those proposing or seconding amendments shall be allowed 3 minutes. A motion's seconder may declare an intention to reserve his/her speech until later in the debate.

A member who has already spoken on a motion shall not speak again whilst it is the subject of debate except:

- To speak once on an amendment moved by another member;
- To exercise a right of reply on a point of order; or by way of personal explanation.

Immediately before it is put to the vote, the proposer of a motion shall have the right of reply.

While a motion is under debate no other motion shall be proposed except

- Amendments
- A motion to close or adjourn the Meeting.

## **Amendments**

Amendments shall be relevant to the motion and shall be:-

- to delete words
- to replace words
- to insert or add words

None of the above will amount to a new proposal, and will not negate the motion before the meeting.

If an amendment is proposed, the proposer of the original motion shall not speak on the amendment, but will have a right of reply at the end of the amendment debate.

The proposer of the amendment, having already spoken on it will have no further right of reply.

- Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at a time.
- No further amendment shall be proposed until the amendment under discussion has been settled.
- If an amendment is lost, other amendments may then be proposed on the original motion.
- If an amendment is carried, the amended motion will replace the original motion. Further amendments may then be proposed.

## **Withdrawal**

A motion or an amendment may be withdrawn by its proposer with the consent of the seconder and of the meeting. An absence of discussion will confirm such consent.

No member may speak upon it after the proposer has asked permission for its withdrawal, unless the meeting refuses such permission.

## **Procedural Motions**

A member who has not previously spoken on a motion under discussion may propose, without comment, after a speech by any other member:-

- "That the motion be now put"

After being seconded, if the Chair decides that the original motion has been sufficiently discussed, the Chair shall put this proposal to the vote. If it is passed, the proposer of the original motion will be given a right of reply. The original motion will then be put to the vote.

- "That the motion be now adjourned"

After being seconded, if the Chair decides that the original motion has been insufficiently discussed and cannot reasonably be sufficiently discussed on that

occasion, the adjournment motion will be put to the vote. The proposer of the original motion will not have a right of reply in these circumstances.

During debate on matters other than formal motions a member may propose:-

- "That the meeting proceed to the next business"

After being seconded, if the Chair decides that the matter has already received an acceptable time for discussion and little is to be gained by continuing, a vote will then be taken on the motion to proceed to the next business.

- "That the meeting do now adjourn"

After being seconded, if the Chair decides that the matter under discussion requires more time, a vote will be taken to adjourn.

The adjournment could be until after a scheduled break. However, if continuing the discussion would entail the agenda not being completed before the scheduled end of the meeting it would have to be decided whether to adjourn the whole meeting to another date, or convene a separate meeting to address the subject under discussion.

## **VOTING**

Unless stated otherwise, all questions shall be decided by a majority of members present and voting. Voting shall be by show of hands and/or the use of the appropriate on-line signal.

When requested by a member, a secret written vote shall be taken. This vote will also include proxy votes held.

If facilities for on-the-spot secret on-line voting are unavailable, announcement of the result may need to be deferred until votes from on-line attendees had been received. The result will be published on the Society's website as soon as it is known, and in the next possible edition of "Suffolk Roots".

A voting member dissenting from the vote may request that dissent to be recorded.

## **VARIATION**

These Rules may varied by a motion carried at a Trustee's Meeting, and recorded in the Trustees' Minutes. The Secretary will then arrange for the published Rules to be updated and re-issued as soon as practicable.

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## **APPENDIX 7: DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

We expect members to:-

- Act honestly
- Behave courteously towards other members, and towards other organisations and the public when in contact with them in a Society context.
- Advise their group Chair or other officer if unable for any reason to complete or fulfil a task or duty voluntarily undertaken. Neglect and muddle can incur extra costs to the Society and cause disrepute.
- Not directly, indirectly, recklessly, vexatiously or maliciously perform or cause any act that may damage the Society or its reputation.
- Not make malicious comment about any member performing duties on behalf of the Society.

If a complaint about a member is received a simple matter may be resolved by a discussion with a Group Chair or other officer. If not, or for a more serious matter, or one involving dishonesty it must be promptly referred to the Society Chair (or if the Chair is involved, to the Secretary).

### **STAGE ONE**

The Chair (or Secretary) should convene a special Disciplinary Committee which should, including him/herself comprise:-

- At least one other Trustee
- At least two non-office holding members, uninvolved in the issue at stake, and not personally known to the complainant(s) or member complained against.

A meeting will then be convened at the earliest opportunity either in person or remotely between the Committee and:-

- The member complained against, who will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend or supporter.
- The person(s) raising the complaint, or up to two spokespersons if a number are involved.

The meeting may result in an agreed resolution which could be:-

- The dismissal of the complaint as being unjustified or trivial.
- The member complained against accepting guidance and promising to do better, or desist from unacceptable conduct.
- The member complained against agreeing to step down from an office or post.
- The person complained against voluntarily resigning membership.

Otherwise, the Chair (or Secretary) will consider the details of the complaint and conduct any further necessary fact-finding investigation. In consultation with the Committee a decision will be made which could include removing the member complained against from an office or post, and/or terminating their membership.

Within two weeks the Chair (or Secretary) will, in writing, advise the member complained against of the hearing's outcome. If this is not possible, he/she will be advised of the reason for the delay, and when a response can be expected.

The outcome notice should include a suitable timescale within which the member complained against must respond if they dispute the outcome.

Where the member complained against accepts the decision then the matter will be closed, subject to any agreed follow-up actions.

## **STAGE TWO**

- Where the member complained against disputes the outcome, he/she may appeal in writing to the Society's Patron.
- The Stage One steps should be followed by the Patron who will then, within two weeks, advise the complainant in writing of the meeting's outcome, or explain any reason for delay and when a full response can be expected.

No further appeal can be made following the response from the Patron to the complainant.

## **DISHONESTY MATTERS** (theft, false accounting, invalid expenses claims etc)

Where, on face value, there is good supporting evidence of dishonesty, the Chair in consultation with the Trustees, should report matters to the police. Membership should be suspended pending the outcome.

At the Chair's and Trustees' discretion however, an exception may be made for very minor matters where there has been no previous instance, and the member complained against admits their behaviour, offers an explanation and resigns his/her membership.

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## **APPENDIX 8: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The Grievance Procedure should be used where a member of the Society believes that he/she has been treated by any of the Society's Trustees, officers or post-holders in a way that is unfair, unjust or unreasonable.

Professional and/or legal advice may be sought at any stage, but is payable by the individual or body seeking the advice.

This procedure cannot be used:-

- By non-members.
- If the complaint is against another non office or non post-holding member.
- Where a member disagrees with the Society over a general matter of policy.
- After a Society member has already gone through the Society Discipline Procedure.

The Society reserves the right to reject any grievance which the Trustees believe is frivolous, trivial or vexatious.

Issues should be discussed first with the individual(s) concerned, as they may well be resolved informally. If this is unsuccessful the following procedure should be used:-

### **STAGE ONE**

1. As soon as possible, the member should raise their grievance in writing with the Society Chair (unless the grievance is against the Chair, when it should be initially raised with the Secretary) stating:-

- Why he/she believes that he/she has been treated unfairly, unjustly or unreasonably.
- What he/she expects to be done to resolve the issue.

The matter will be investigated by the Chair who will send the complainant a written response. All grievances or complaints will be dealt with sensitively and quickly.

2. If the matter cannot be resolved through correspondence, the Chair (or Secretary) should, within four weeks, arrange a personal meeting with the complainant to discuss the grievance.

At this meeting:-

- At least two non-office holding members, uninvolved in the issue at stake, and not personally known to the complainant or person complained against should be present
- The complainant will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend or supporter.
- The Trustee, officer or post-holder complained against will also be invited. The Chair (or Secretary) shall decide whether the complainant shall be present while the person complained against is heard.
- For overseas members, where a meeting is impractical, the Chair will agree with the individual what medium of communication is preferred

3. The Chair (or Secretary) will consider the details of the grievance and conduct any further necessary fact-finding investigation.

4. Within two weeks the Chair (or Secretary) will advise the complainant in writing of the hearing's outcome. If this is not possible, the complainant will be advised of the reason for the delay, and when he/she can expect a response.

The outcome notice should include a suitable timescale within which the complainant must respond if still dissatisfied.

Where the complainant is satisfied with the Stage One outcome, then the matter will be closed, subject to any agreed follow-up actions.

## **STAGE TWO**

1. Where the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage One outcome, he/she may raise their grievance in writing with the Society's Patron.

2. Steps 2-4 of Stage One should be followed by the Patron who will then within two weeks advise the complainant in writing of the meeting's outcome, or explain any reason for delay and when a full response can be expected.

No further appeal can be made following the response from the Patron to the complainant.

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## **APPENDIX 9**

# **RETENTION OF SOCIETY RECORDS**

The Society will maintain records in accordance with the statutory regulations in force, and for at least the minimum periods as required by:-

The Charities Commission  
The Companies Act (currently 2018)  
The Data Protection Regulation  
Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC)

Records to be kept in perpetuity currently comprise:-

- Certificate of incorporation.
- Memorandum and Articles of Association plus any amendments.
- Charity Registration Document.
- Data Protection:- *Registration Certificate, Renewal Papers, Direct Debit Form.*
- Accounts:- *Annual Accounts, Annual Return.*
- Subsidiary Records relating to setting up, and transfer of assets and liabilities.
- Contracts with consultants and suppliers of services.
- General Meetings:- *Calling notices, Attendee Records, Agenda, Minutes, Chair's Report Resolutions.*
- Trustee Meetings:- *Agendas, Attendee Records, Minutes, Documents of Policies Adopted.*

Financial records to be kept for 6 years from the year end in which transactions occurred currently comprise:-

- Legacy Details.
- Cash Book Records of payments and receipts
- Sales and Purchase Ledgers
- Capital and Revenue Invoices
- Petty Cash Record
- Remittance Advices
- Bank Reconciliations
- Bank Statements,
- Bank Paying-in Counterfoils,

Record to be kept for 3 years - Accident Book

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# **APPENDIX 10**

## **HIRING AND BOOKING OF ROOMS**

### **LEGAL AUTHORITY**

Authority for making agreements rests with the Trustees.

Provided the conditions below are followed, the authority to hire/book will be delegated to a named person (eg Group leader or treasurer, event organiser etc).

### **CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO ROOMS USED FOR A SOCIETY PURPOSE**

The following conditions apply whether the general public are included or not; and whether or not a formal hire fee is paid.

- The room shall be suitable for the planned purpose.
- Funds are available to cover the cost of hire.
- Consideration has been given to Health and Safety aspect, and if necessary a risk assessment is carried out.
- The suitability for including disabled people has been considered.
- A record is kept of all people attending, indicating whether or not they are a Society Member. This is necessary for insurance purposes.

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# **APPENDIX 11: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

## **A: GENERAL RULES FOR SUB-COMMITTEES**

### **1. A SUB-COMMITTEE IS A BODY OF MEMBERS SET UP BY**

- The members at an Annual General Meeting.
- The Trustees at a duly convened Trustees Meeting.

### **2. MEMBERSHIP**

- The membership of each committee shall be set out in the Terms of reference for that Committee.
- The Chair of each committee shall be appointed by the Trustees or chosen by the Sub Committee members.
- Members need not be Trustees.

### **3. TRUSTEES:**

All Trustees shall be ex-officio members of all Committees, but unless they are members of the Committee shall only attend when required.

### **4. REVIEW**

The membership of each committee will be reviewed following the Society's Annual General Meeting.

### **5. ACTIVITIES**

Each sub-committee's activities shall be defined in its Terms of Reference agreed by the Trustees.

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## **B: TRUSTEES' MEETINGS**

### **PURPOSE:**

The Trustees make decisions on the overall running of the Society. They also appoint Directors to its Subsidiary Company.

### **APPLICATION OF THE GENERAL RULES (Section 7A):**

The Society's General Rules for Committees apply in full to meetings of the Trustees.

### **POWERS & OBJECTIVES**

- To make decisions on running the Society for the benefit of the members, and to oversee its Educational Objective.
- To take financial decisions on behalf of the Society.
- To take the final decision on membership after any decision taken under the Disciplinary Procedure (Appendix 4)

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Trustees shall either:-

- Be elected by the members at the Annual General Meeting or
- Be appointed under the provisions of the Articles of Association or
- Be co-opted by existing Trustees to a maximum of 12.

### **QUORUM**

Two, or not less than one third of the Trustees, whichever is the greater.

### **CHAIRSHIP**

The Society Chair shall chair meetings of Trustees.

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## **C: GROUP COMMITTEES**

### **PURPOSE**

A Group's Committee makes decisions on the running of the group according to the provisions of the Group Protocol (Appendix 3) and for the benefit of its attendees at meetings and activities.

### **APPLICATION OF THE GENERAL RULES**

The General Rules for Sub - Committees (Appendix 7A) do not apply to Group' Committees as these are constituted in accordance with the Group Protocol (Appendix 3)

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership shall consist of the those people elected by the Group's members at their Annual General Meeting, in accordance with the procedure set down in the Group Protocol (Appendix 3).

### **CHAIRSHIP**

The Chair shall be elected at the Group's Annual General Meeting.

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## **D: REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES**

### **GENERAL POLICY:**

The Society is a Charitable Trust where all Trustees, Officers and Members are volunteers who freely and willingly offer their time for the benefit of the Society.

Whilst members are not paid for the duties they undertake, the Society recognizes that they should not be financially disadvantaged by performing them and will reimburse expenses necessarily incurred.

The Trustees will regularly review rates payable for mileage, overnight expenses and subsistence.

### **CLAIMING**

Claims should be supported where possible by receipts, and either made in writing or e-mailed to the correct officer, with receipts attached. Receipts can be original till-roll type, or a print-out or screen snip image of an on-line receipt confirming on-line ticket purchase, hotel booking etc.

Where duties performed are for the benefit of a budget holding activity, expenses should be claimed from the Budget Holder for approval, then passed to the Treasurer for payment.

Where duties are performed for the benefit of a Group, expenses should be claimed from the Group's Treasurer, and accounted for in the Group's accounts.

Otherwise expenses should be claimed from the Society Treasurer.

### **ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURE**

#### **1) Travel including parking fees.**

Travel to and from relevant meetings, fairs and, project work venues; or other function at the request of the Trustees.

Travel may be by car or public transport whichever is most practicable and convenient. Long distance travel by public transport should be booked sufficiently in advance so as to obtain the most favourable fare.

#### **2) Hotel Accommodation**

Where it is impracticable or unreasonable to expect a member to represent the Society and return home the same day, hotel accommodation and an evening meal may be claimed.

Accommodation should be of a reasonable standard and booked sufficiently in advance so as to obtain the most favourable rate.

### **3) Subsistence**

If a member attends a meeting, function or duty lasting a full day where refreshments and lunch are not provided, expenses for beverages, soft drinks and lunch may be claimed. It is anticipated that such claims would be appropriate but modest.

### **4) Stationery, Postage and Printer inks.**

Stationery, postage and printing costs will be reimbursed. A record should be kept of items posted.

### **5) Telephone Calls.**

The cost of necessary telephone calls which are billed additionally to an existing personal telephone contract will be reimbursed. A record should be kept of calls made.

### **6) Annual General Meeting, Promotional and Social Events**

For Society events, the Organisers should discuss with the Trustees proposed expenditure and the options available for speakers, venue hire, refreshments etc. The Trustees will agree a collective cost for each event.

A Group event should be organized and funded by that Group.

### **7) Storage**

Society stocks of CDs, books, display equipment etc are stored in a rented facility. The Keyholder should discuss with the Trustees the costs of suitable facility options available, the final choice being agreed between them.

### **8) Capital Purchases**

Purchases of Capital equipment up to a moderate value may be authorized by the Chair or Treasurer. Applications for major capital expenditure should be presented to, and authorised by the Trustees. The sum deemed “Moderate” will be reviewed by the Trustees annually.

### **SOCIETY CREDIT CARDS**

The issue of a Society Credit Card is limited to the Fairs Organizer and the Treasurer.

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## **E: BUDGETS**

### **PURPOSE**

The Trustees, on the advice of the Treasurer, shall each year agree an annual budgets for each of the Society's specific activities.

### **BUDGET HOLDERS**

A member budget holder will be appointed for each specific activity. The budget holder will be responsible for ensuring that their specific activity remains within budget.

A quarterly report should be provided to the Trustees of expenditure incurred in the activity.

Expenses incurred on behalf Society but outside the scope of their specified budgetary activity should be submitted separately

A member who is an undischarged bankrupt may not be a budget holder.

### **ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURE FOR ACTIVITIES ALLOCATED THEIR OWN BUDGETS:-**

All budgets cover the following basic outgoings:-

- Postage, stationery, inks.
- Necessary telephone calls which are not covered without extra charge in an existing personal telephone contract.
- Necessary travel expenses, including parking fees.
- Any additional expenditure deemed necessary.

In Addition:-

#### **1 Fairs**

- Necessary hotel accommodation and subsistence.
- Table hiring fees.

#### **2, Projects (eg Production of parish register CDs).**

- Reimbursement of necessary annual subscriptions, fees and other payments
- Purchases of fiche and materials, necessary to undertake transcriptions etc.

The costs of CD manufacturers' invoices will be agreed and met separately.



### **3. Production of Suffolk Roots**

- Necessary upgrades of personal equipment.
- Necessary upgrades in software

The cost of printing, materials supply, despatch and postage is additional to the Budget and agreed and met separately.

### **4. Website**

- Service provider fees.
- Necessary upgrades of personal equipment

### **5. Publicity**

- Advertising and printing costs

### **OVERSPEND**

If it appears that expenditure will exceed the budget, the budget holder should apply to the Trustees for additional funding.

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## **F: PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE**

### **PURPOSE**

The Sub-committee makes decisions on behalf of the Society concerning projects and publications which have been delegated to it by the Trustees.

### **APPLICATION OF THE GENERAL RULES**

The Society's General Rules for Sub-committees (Appendix 7a) apply in full.

### **POWERS AND OBJECTIVES**

The Sub-committee can make decisions concerning projects and publications which are of such a nature that they do not require the approval of the Trustees.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership shall consist of the Project Coordinators, Service Providers, the editor of *Suffolk Roots* and the Publications Managers.

### **CHAIRSHIP**

The Chair shall be elected by the members of the Sub-committee, or the Society Chair may be appointed.

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## **G: JOURNAL EDITOR (or EDITORIAL GROUP)**

The Journal Editor's role is to administer all aspects of the compilation and production of the Society's Journal, *Suffolk Roots*.

This journal is currently issued quarterly in March, June, September and December.

The Editor role can be fulfilled by one or more people, dividing the work between them as they see fit.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

*The following is based upon the "Publishers' Manual 2020" written by our late Editor, Geoff Dennish.*

The Editor undertakes the following tasks, or delegates them to another person/organisation and ensures that they have been carried out:

- Preparing articles received from members and others for inclusion in the journal by:-
  - a) Checking for style and, where possible, factual accuracy.
  - b) Liaising with the author on any required significant changes
  - c) Ensuring that no material is subject to copyright, OR that the correct permissions have been obtained and is acknowledged in the article;
- Producing a quarterly report to the Society Trustees.
- Providing advice/feedback on matters of journal development.
- Attempting to source items of interest that is believed would suit the Journal, (e.g. book reviews, changes in Family History related fees and/or services, etc.)
- Ensuring that items key to Society's operation and/or keeping members informed are placed in the relevant Journal, including:
  - a) The Membership Renewal Slip (March Journal)
  - b) AGM Notice and Agenda plus Nomination & Proxy Forms (September Journal)
  - c) AGM reports and minutes (following September Journal)
  - d) EGM reports and minutes (subsequent Journal)
- Supplying copy to the printer in digital form.
- Notifying the Membership Secretary when the copy is sent so that he/she knows to provide the Press with the mailing list.
- Proof-reading the draft Journal and requesting alterations as appropriate.

(Note: The printer's invoice is sent direct to the Treasurer for payment.)

## **REQUIREMENTS**

**A** Secure password protected access to a computer.

**B** The following skills:-

- Confident computer skills to compile and edit the copy, provide it to the printer, and mark up the proofs using Adobe Acrobat (or such other application as may be agreed).
- Organisational skills.
- The ability to plan their own work, work on own initiative and meet deadlines.
- Oral and written communication skills.
- Tact, discretion, and respect for confidentiality.
- To have the ability to work as part of a team.
- To be flexible.

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## **H: SFHS PUBLICATIONS LTD**

### **PURPOSE**

The Directors shall make decisions on the trading activities of Suffolk Family History Society

### **APPLICATION OF THE GENERAL RULES**

The Society's General Rules for Committees do not apply to this Board as it is constituted in accordance with its own Memorandum and Activities of Association.

### **POWERS AND OBJECTIVES**

The Committee exists to make decisions on the running of the Company for the benefit of the members of Suffolk Family History Society.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership shall consist of such Trustees of Suffolk Family History Society as the Society Trustees shall appoint.

### **CHAIRSHIP**

The Chair of the Society will be the Chair of the Board

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