

The Society's Bye Laws

As revised at the Special General Meetings held on 7 June 1976, 8 June 1981, 4 June 1990, 13 June 1994, 5 June 1995, 3 June 1996, 4 June 2001, 10 June 2002, 2 June 2003, 6 September 2021, and 3 October 2022.

Chapter 1 Objects and Membership

1.1 THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY is instituted for the Advancement of Geographical Science. The Society's legal name, as set out in our Charter, is 'The Royal Geographical Society'. It is also known as 'The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)' and 'The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)'.

1.2 There shall be three categories of membership, each of which may have one or more sub-categories for which Council shall lay down regulations regarding eligibility criteria, benefits, rate of subscription and other fees payable. This information is publicly available in the 'Membership applications and benefits by category' document.

- Fellows
- Members
- Organisational Members

1.3 References to "the membership" and "members of the Society" shall include all categories of membership set out in Clause 1.2 above unless the context otherwise requires.

Chapter 2 Constitution

2.1 A Council shall be elected from the Fellows to conduct the affairs of the Society. The Council shall consist of a President, an Honorary Treasurer, five Vice Presidents and five Councillors to represent each of the following areas: Education; Expeditions and Fieldwork; Membership; Professional; Research and Higher Education; and up to four further Councillors co-opted by the Council.

2.2 The President, Vice Presidents, Honorary Treasurer, and Councillors shall be elected by the Fellowship for a term of four years. The Honorary Treasurer may stand for re-election for a further two years. In relation to all such elections, years of service are measured between Annual General Meetings of the Society.

2.3 Co-opted Councillors shall be appointed by the Council for a term of up to four years.

- 2.4 In the case of the death, sustained absence or resignation of the President or other Officer during the course of a year of service, the Council shall have the power to appoint one of its number to perform the duties of the relevant office until the next Annual General Meeting.
- 2.5 A retiring President or Honorary Treasurer shall not thereafter be eligible for election to the same office. A retiring Vice President shall not be eligible for election as a Vice President or as a Councillor until two years have expired since their retirement as Vice President. A retiring Councillor (elected or co-opted) shall not be eligible for election as a Councillor until one year has elapsed since their retirement as Councillor.
- 2.6 All elected members of Council should have significant and relevant experience related to the position for which they are elected.
- 2.7 Any Fellow may stand for election to the Council or as an Officer. All candidates for election must be proposed by five or more Fellows.
- 2.8 The Council shall appoint a Director and Secretary to manage the affairs of the Society under the guidance of the Council. The Director and Secretary is ex-officio a member of Council.
- 2.9 The Council shall ensure that all elements of the Society's policies and processes are free from unlawful discrimination.

Chapter 3 Publications and Collections

- 3.1 The Society shall publish or licence to be published, in any form, such periodical publications as may be required.
- 3.2 A member of the Society is entitled to receive publications in accordance with their membership category and subscription level. Subject to this Bye Law, the Council may make decisions from time to time concerning the receipt of publications.
- 3.3 The Society shall maintain a Library and a collection of Maps, Charts, Photographs, and Archival materials connected with Geographical Science to which members of the Society shall have access and borrowing entitlements, under such restrictions as may appear advisable to the Council and are made known to the members.

Chapter 4 Fellows

- 4.1 A person wishing to become a Fellow of the Society must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council:
- (a) a sufficient involvement in geography or an allied subject through study, training, profession, research, publications or other work of a similar nature,
 - or
 - (b) not less than five years' continuous commitment to the Society as a Member, at the discretion of Council.
- 4.2 The specifics of the application process shall be outlined in the publicly available document 'Membership applications and benefits by category' and reviewed by

6.2 From time-to-time Council may appoint Honorary Members to mark outstanding services to public life and to international affairs that merit recognition by the Society.

6.3 Honorary Fellows and Honorary Members shall enjoy such privileges as the Council may from time to time determine, and shall not as such be liable to make any subscription payments.

Chapter 7 Members

7.1 Any individual who declares a genuine interest in geography in a broad sense, such as through travel, may apply to join the Society as a Member in one of the sub-categories prescribed by Council.

7.2 Members are entitled to participate in consultations. They are also entitled to attend Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings. They shall have no right to vote at any meeting of the Society, or on the election of Officers and Councillors, and shall not be eligible to be elected to the Council of the Society.

7.3 The specifics of the application process shall be outlined in publicly available document 'Membership applications and benefits by category', and reviewed by Council periodically.

7.4 Members may apply for Fellowship in the normal way at any time during their membership if they meet the criteria, but they may automatically be considered for Fellowship of the Society after five years continuous commitment if they wish.

7.5 Members may receive benefits and services from the Society according to their sub-category of membership, upon such terms and conditions and in such manner and to such extent as may be determined by the Council from time to time and outlined in the publicly available document 'Membership applications and benefits by category'.

7.6 The Council reserves the right not to approve an application for Membership if, for any reason that it shall not be bound to disclose, it believes the application is not appropriate.

7.7 A Member should not use any style after their name to indicate membership of the Society.

Chapter 8 Organisational Members

8.1 Organisational Members may be any of the following who in the opinion of the Council are interested directly or indirectly in the science of geography, namely any government department or government institution or any educational, expeditionary, fieldwork, commercial, industrial or professional organisation or body or any other body established for purposes relevant to the objects of the Society.

8.2 The specifics of the application process shall be outlined in publicly available document 'Membership applications and benefits by category' that is reviewed by Council periodically.

8.3 Organisational Members may receive benefits and services from the Society

according to their sub-category of membership, upon such terms and conditions and in such manner and to such extent as may be determined by the Council from time to time and outlined in publicly available document 'Membership applications and benefits by category' that is reviewed by Council periodically.

8.4 Organisational Members are entitled to participate in consultations. They are also entitled to attend Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings. They shall have no right to vote at any meeting of the Society, or on the election of Officers and Councillors, and shall not be eligible to be elected to the Council of the Society.

Chapter 9 Honorary Vice Presidents

9.1 The Council may select one or more Fellows of the Society to be Honorary Vice Presidents, who shall enjoy such rights as the Council may from time to time determine.

9.2 The names of Honorary Vice Presidents so selected shall be announced at the next Annual General Meeting.

9.3 Every Past President of the Society shall ipso facto be an Honorary Vice President.

9.4 Every Honorary Vice President after appointment shall remain as such so long as they continue to be a Fellow.

Chapter 10 Withdrawal and Removal of Fellows and Members

10.1 Any member of the Society may withdraw from the Society by signifying their wish to do so, in writing addressed to the Director and Secretary.

10.2 Any member may be removed from the Society for failure to pay the annual subscription or other debt to the Society.

10.3 The Council may remove any member from membership of the Society if they breach the Code of Conduct or if in the opinion of the Council they have acted in any other manner that is detrimental to the interests of the Society PROVIDED THAT no decision to remove a member shall take effect before the member concerned has been given an opportunity to make oral or written representations to the Council and those representations have been duly considered.

Chapter 11 Annual General Meetings

11.1 The Annual General Meeting of the members of the Society shall be held on a Monday in the month of June subsequent to the last Ordinary Meeting of the Session, or on such other date as the Council may determine.

11.2 Notice of this Meeting shall be sent out to every member, whose postal or email address is known, at least three weeks before the day of Meeting.

11.3 The following items shall form the Agenda for the Annual General Meeting:

12.4 Fellows may vote at an SGM either in person, digitally, by post, or by giving a proxy to the President or other Fellow attending the SGM. Postal votes or proxies, signed by the Fellow and including their Fellowship number, must be received at least two working days prior to the SGM. No resolution shall be adopted unless supported by at least two-thirds of the votes so received or cast at the meeting.

12.5 The chair at a Special General Meeting shall be taken and the chair appointed in like manner as at an Annual General Meeting.

Chapter 13 Ordinary Meetings of the Society

13.1 Ordinary Meetings shall be held on Monday evenings during spring, summer and autumn terms; or otherwise as judged expedient by the Council.

13.2 Fellows and Members of the Society will normally be admitted to Meetings, on showing their membership card which will be sent to all those whose subscriptions are not in arrears.

13.3 Members may bring one guest to those lectures that are indicated in the programme of meetings as being open to guests. Guests may also be admitted by invitation from the Council.

13.4 At the Ordinary Meetings of the Society nothing relating to its regulations or management shall be brought forward.

Chapter 14 Subscriptions

14.1 (a) All members of the Society shall be required to pay on joining and subsequently on the anniversary of their joining each year an Annual Subscription, except as otherwise provided.

(b) No Fellow shall be entitled to vote, nor shall any member be entitled to enjoy any privilege of the Society once their membership has lapsed.

(c) Fellows except as otherwise provided may compound for their Annual Subscriptions on joining or at any subsequent time by payment of the sum appropriate to their age. Life compounding fees shall be calculated by an actuary, revised periodically and subject to approval by the Council. The Table of Fees will be available from the Society.

14.2 Any Fellow or Member who has completed a total of forty (40) years of membership of either the Society and/or of The Institute of British Geographers may choose to pay such reduced rate of subscription as may be decided by Council.

Chapter 15 Conferences, Seminars and other Functions

15.1 There shall be an Annual Conference, open to all members on payment of appropriate fees.

15.2 The Society may organise such other meetings as it deems appropriate and charge accordingly.

15.3 No resolutions relating to the regulations or management of the Society shall be brought forward at any Conference, Seminar or other such Meeting.

15.4 Any group of Fellows with shared geographical interests may apply to the Council for permission to form a research, working or professional practice group of the Society. All approved groups will be governed by such regulations as the Council may from time-to-time issue and as are set out in the documentation related to the Society's research and professional groups.

Chapter 16 The Society's Premises

16.1 The membership of the Society may use the facilities and amenities of the Society upon such terms and conditions and in such manner and to such extent as the Council may from time to time determine and as are set out in the 'Membership applications and benefits by category' document and the Code of Conduct.

16.2 To avoid overcrowding at lectures or other functions, the Council may from time-to-time institute such measures as they think fit to control the number of persons seeking to attend them.

Chapter 17 Council

17.1 The governance of the Society, and the management of all its concerns, are entrusted to the Council, subject to the provisions of the Charter and the Bye Laws of the Society.

17.2 The President, any one of the Vice Presidents, or any three other members of the Council, may at any time cause a Meeting of the Council to be called; and when such a Meeting is to be held, every member of the Council must be notified with three weeks' notice.

17.3 In all Meetings of the Council, five shall be a quorum (not including ex officio and co-opted members); and all questions shall be decided by vote, unless a ballot be demanded. Any determination of the Council, whether by vote or ballot, shall, at the desire of any two members present, be deferred to the succeeding Meeting; but no question shall be more than once so deferred.

17.4 Minutes of the Proceedings of every Meeting of the Council shall be taken by the Director and Secretary or their deputy or, if both are absent, by some member of Council whom the President or Chair shall appoint for the occasion. The Minutes shall be circulated before the next Meeting of the Council, and at such meetings shall be approved by the President or Chair.

17.5 The Accounts of the Society shall be audited and approved by the Council each year; and at the Annual General Meeting the Council shall present a complete statement thereof, together with a Report on the general affairs of the Society during the preceding year.

17.6 There shall also be permanent Committees of Council. The number, designation, and purposes of such Committees shall be arranged by the Council as, from time-to-time, may seem necessary.

17.7 The Committees for Education, Expeditions and Fieldwork, Research and Higher Education and Professional Practice shall each be chaired by the Vice President elected for that area and the Councillor elected for that area shall be a member.

17.8 The Regions Committee will be chaired by the Vice President elected for Membership.

17.9 Councillors (elected and co-opted) shall by virtue of their office be members of the relevant Committees.

17.10 The Council empowers the Director and Secretary, with the approval of the Finance Committee, to appoint staff to carry out the business of the Society and to decide their job descriptions, conditions of service, and remuneration, subject to any Agreement with any Staff Association currently in force.

17.11 The Council may invest the funds of the Society in the name of the Society (or in the name of any trust corporation or bank or company as nominee) according to the investment objectives and Responsible Investment Policy determined by Council.

17.12 The Society shall not make or distribute any dividend, division, or bonus in money, unto or between its Fellows.

Chapter 18 Officers of the Society

Section 1. – President

18.1.1 The President when present is Chair of the Council.

18.1.2 The President shall execute and/or cause to be executed, the Bye Laws of the Society; shall see that all the Officers of the Society perform the duties assigned to them; shall call for Reports and Accounts from Committees and persons; shall cause of their own authority Special Meetings of the Council and of Committees to be summoned; and shall propose, from time-to-time, to the Council such measures as shall appear to them conducive to the welfare of the Society.

18.1.3 When prevented from being present at the meetings of the Fellows or Council, or from otherwise attending to the current business of the Society, the President shall give timely notice thereof to one of the Vice Presidents, or, in their absence, to some other member of the Council, who shall exercise their authority during their absence.

18.1.4 In all Meetings of the Society and Council, except in the cases otherwise provided for, the decision of a majority of the Fellows voting shall be considered as the decision of the Meeting, the President or Chair having only a casting vote.

Section 2. – Vice Presidents

18.2.1. One of the Vice Presidents to be nominated by the President shall exercise the authority of the President when the President is absent.

Section 3. - Honorary Treasurer

18.3.1 The Honorary Treasurer shall advise the Council upon all questions affecting the Finances of the Society and shall, by virtue of their office, be Chair of the Finance Committee of the Council.

18.3.2 The Accounts of the Society shall be audited annually by a Chartered or Incorporated Accountant, and an Annual Statement and Balance Sheet shall be prepared for submission to the Council.

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18.3.3 The Vice Presidents shall be ex officio members of the Finance Committee.

Section 4. - Director and Secretary

18.4.1 The Director and Secretary shall be a salaried Officer, appointed by the Council following public advertisement, and responsible for the management of the affairs of the Society under the guidance of Council.