



*Astrobiology  
Society of  
Britain*

## **Astrobiology Society of Britain Society Constitution 2016**

### **1. NAME**

The group shall be called the Astrobiology Society of Britain.

### **2. ABOUT THE SOCIETY**

The Astrobiology Society of Britain (ASB), founded in March 2003, is a learned society for scientists and others interested in the relationship between life and its cosmic environment. This covers a diversity of topics and research methodologies, encompassing observational astronomy, theoretical astrophysics, geological expeditions, and biologically-related studies including laboratory and field-based microbiology, biochemistry, prebiotic chemistry and origins of life studies. The ASB is a highly interdisciplinary forum, with a membership spanning the full spectrum of these topics, and is open to all professional scientists and students interested in the field. Our membership is international. In addition to acting as a nexus for its members, the ASB engages in activities which include, running a dedicated website, publishing a quarterly newsletter and organizing regular workshops and conferences. Our newsletter provides updates on all aspects of astrobiology, from the latest results and news to activities of our members and up-coming international conferences and meetings of astrobiological interest. The ASB also holds annual workshops for members, as well as its own conference every two years, which acts as a UK focus for discussion in astrobiology.

### **3. AIMS OF THE SOCIETY**

The Aims of the ASB shall be to promote the importance of astrobiology as an intellectual enterprise, and to this end it will work:

- (i) To support research and teaching in astrobiology throughout the UK.
- (ii) To work with other related groups or societies towards the common cause.
- (iii) To strive for the continuity of funding and academic effort required to sustain astrobiology as an activity and an intellectual community.
- (iv) To build support for astrobiology within funding resources (research councils in UK; equivalent bodies in EU and elsewhere).

- (v) To achieve appropriate representation of the field in relevant scientific bodies and societies.

#### **4. POWERS**

The Astrobiology Society of Britain shall have the power to:

- (i) Raise money
- (ii) Open bank accounts
- (iii) Take out insurance
- (iv) Employ staff
- (v) Acquire and manage buildings
- (vi) Organise courses and events
- (vii) Work with other groups and exchange information
- (viii) Do anything that is lawful which will help it to fulfil its aims

#### **5. MEMBERSHIP**

- (i) Membership of the ASB shall be open to any person engaged in astrobiological research who is interested in helping the Group to achieve its aims, willing to abide by the rules of the Society and willing to pay any subscription agreed by the Management Committee.
- (ii) Membership shall be available to anyone without regard to gender, race, nationality, disability, sexual preference, religion or belief.
- (iii) Every individual member shall have one vote at General Meetings.
- (iv) The membership of any member may be terminated for good reason by the Management Committee who must write to said member outlining those reasons. Members in this situation will have the right to a minuted hearing with the Management Committee before a final decision is made.
- (v) Members of the general public may become “Friends of the Society” and have access to the regular newsletters

#### **6. MANAGEMENT**

- (i) The committee will consist of a Chair (the President or a proxy thereof), Communications Officers (2 or 3), Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary (i.e. 5 named officers) and ordinary members (*ca* 9 which are to include at least one PhD student, one representative from the UK Space Agency and one from the UK Centre for Astrobiology).
- (ii) Nomination to the committee will be from the paid-up membership. All nominees must have a proposer and seconder who are themselves paid-up members of the society.
- (iii) A call for nominations will be made by the Secretary every 2 years, to allow nominees to attend the autumn committee meeting, commencing autumn 2016. Where an election is required, this will be open to the membership (paid-up when election announced) and organised by the Secretary. All committee members will

be eligible to vote in their capacity as members of the society, but in the event of a tie, the committee will itself take an internal vote on the candidates. In the event of a tie at that stage, the Chair will cast a deciding vote.

(iv) The Chair will be elected, by the committee, on a 2-year basis at the autumn committee meeting, with the option for re-election (for a maximum of two additional terms). The new Chair will take office at the conclusion of that meeting. The retiring Chair will remain a committee member unless he/she wishes to resign from the committee.

(v) All other officer posts will not be subject to a fixed period of office but where an officer wishes to stand down, the committee will be charged with appointing a successor. The posts will be elected by the committee at the autumn committee meeting, commencing autumn 2016.

(vi) Officers must have served on the committee for at least 6 months prior to being appointed.

(vii) Every two years, three persons will offer to stand down from the committee. They will be resignees, or the longest serving non-officers. The Chair will enable this by asking committee members what they intend to do. This will be concurrent with the call for nominations. In the absence of new nominations or co-opting, the Chair will not require members to stand down.

(viii) The committee may co-opt members as deemed appropriate, for example upon resignations at irregular times.

## **7. DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**

(i) The duties of the Chairperson are to chair meetings of the Committee; represent the ASB at functions/meetings that the ASB has been invited to; act as spokesperson for the ASB when necessary.

(ii) The duties of the Secretary are to: take and keep minutes of meetings; prepare the agenda for meetings of the Committee and the Society in consultation with the Committee and deal with correspondence.

(iii) The duties of the Membership Secretary are to maintain the membership list; act as collection point for new membership applications and present these for ratification at Committee meetings.

(iv) The duties of the Communications Officers are divided amongst two or three Committee members. They are to collect and circulate any relevant information within the Society on matters of outreach and engagement; to communicate appropriate news items to Society members and to maintain the Society's website.

(v) The duties of the Treasurer are to supervise the financial affairs of the Society and keep proper accounts that show all monies collected and paid out by the Society.

## **8. FINANCE**

(i) Any money obtained by the Society shall be used only for the Society.

(ii) Any bank accounts opened for the Society shall be in the name of the Society.

(iii) Any cheques issued shall be signed by the Treasurer and/or one other nominated official.

**9. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

- (i) The Society shall hold a biennial General Meeting (BGM) to be held contemporaneously with the ASB conference of that year.
- (ii) All members shall be given at least fourteen days' notice of the BGM and shall be entitled to attend and vote. The quorum for an BGM shall be 20 members.
- (iii) The business of the BGM shall include: receiving a report from the Chairperson on the Society`s activities over the year; receiving a report from the Treasurer on the finances of the Society, electing a new Management Committee and considering any other matter as may be decided.

**10. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**

A Special General Meeting may be called by the Management Committee or by any group of at least three (3) members to discuss an urgent matter. The Secretary shall give all members fourteen days' notice of any Special General Meeting together with notice of the business to be discussed. All members shall be entitled to attend and vote, either personally at the SGM or electronically in advance of the meeting.

**11. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION**

Any changes to this Constitution must be agreed by at least two-thirds of those members present and voting at any General Meeting.

**12. DISSOLUTION**

The Society may be wound up at any time if agreed by two-thirds of those members present and voting at any General Meeting. In the event of winding up, any assets remaining after all debts have been paid shall be given to another Society with similar aims. This constitution was adopted at a general meeting of the Society on

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016

Signed by:



Chairperson:

Dr Terence P. Kee

Secretary: Dr Lewis Dartnel



*Louisa Preston*

Treasurer:

Dr Louisa Preston

Other Committee members:

<i>Ian Crawford</i>	Professor Ian Crawford
<i>N Lane</i>	Dr Nick Lane
<i>Euan Monaghan</i>	Dr Euan Monaghan
<i>J Horner</i>	Dr Jonti Horner
<i>J Wadsworth</i>	Jennifer Wadsworth
<i>J Malley-James</i>	Dr Jack O'Malley-James
<i>Karen Olsson-Francis</i>	Dr Karen Olsson-Francis
<i>Zita Carla Tavares Pinto Martins</i>	Dr Zita Martins
<i>Manish Patel</i>	Dr Manish Patel
<i>A Rushby</i>	Dr Andrew Rushby