

Hythe Civic Society
Annual General Meeting – 24 May 2022
Report of the Executive Committee
Constitution Amendments

Introduction

1. Over the course of the last few months the Executive Committee has reviewed the Society's Constitution. There are three reasons for this:

- a) To ensure the Society's arrangements at least meet the recommended practice of the Charity Commission as set out in its current Code of Governance advice for small charities
- b) To ensure that our arrangements properly reflect the ongoing work of the Society,
- c) To ensure we remain fit-for-purpose and a respected local organisation.

2. A full copy of the draft amended Constitution is included with this report - amendments are highlighted in Red. The Executive Committee recommends this draft for approval and that the Annual Meeting authorises the Executive to seek the required consent of the Charity Commission before changes may be adopted.

Explanation

3. Our Constitution is effectively in four parts.

Objects (defining what the Society can do – there are three currently).

4. The Executive Committee is recommending the addition of one new 'Object' (Object 4 – to promote civic pride in the area of benefit) along with small amendments to the wording of existing Object No 2. Civic Pride in our context would mean working to stimulate interest in increasing overall levels of public satisfaction with Hythe as a place. It is not intended for the Society to use this Object to become more generally involved in community social issues.

5. The new Object promotes an existing Power (what the Society may do to further its Objects) that has been present from the outset of the Constitution. By having this as an Object would clarify and better justify some of the work of the Society which has evolved over time. For example, our work associated to support 'Hythe in Bloom' and other such environmental projects, including

through the volunteer gardeners' group and the Community Woodland project for Eaton Lands is aimed at promoting Hythe, maintaining Hythe's character and increasing overall levels of public satisfaction with Hythe as a place. This work also contributes to environmental benefits. Therefore, 'Civic Pride' as an Object would, for example enable the Society to supplement its work and focus on Hythe's 'bricks and mortar' and historical characteristics through working with some other community groups and local bodies that share interests in developing people's satisfaction with Hythe as a place more generally.

6. Textual amendments to the existing Object No 2 are recommended to clarify that the work of the Society is both about heritage and history, and that we help to inform Members and others about issues not just of relevance to Hythe but about aspects of interest farther afield, particularly through our Talks programme.

7. These changes will require the consent of the Charity Commission as any proposed changes to Objects are required to be notified to the CC.

Powers (in the Constitution these immediately follow the current Objects)

8. These are the points that follow immediately after the Objects and are numbered 1 – 16. This set of powers sets down the principal actions that can be taken to further the Society's Objects.

9. Various revisions are recommended to help ensure the Society is working to good practice, that our Society is outwardly focused and that our Constitution is updated to reflect the current and growing means of publicising the Society through its website and social media channels.

Rules

10. Following the 'Powers', the constitution sets down a number of procedural and administrative rules to ensure that our arrangements are fair, reasonable and transparent.

11. Various amendments are proposed that:

- Update the existing Constitution where needed,
- Help ensure the Society's arrangements at least meet the advice within the Charity Commission's recommended Code of Governance for small charities,

- Provide reasonable flexibility for the Society to maintain its position as a valued and respected local organisation.

12. Where new policies or procedural rules are suggested, the Executive Committee will work to put these in place over the coming months.

Notes - (the last part of the Constitution document)

13. Notes to the Constitution are designed to provide clarity and additional information on administrative requirements and operational procedures. In this review the Executive Committee has added a number of new Notes designed to ensure that our operational practices remain fit-for-purpose.

Recommendation

That the Annual General Meeting approves the draft amended Constitution appended to this report and that the Executive Committee be authorised to seek the Charity Commission's consent to the amendments, where once notified to the Society the amendments shall take effect.

Paul Naylor

On behalf of the Executive Committee