

RULES FOR CONSTITUTION (1991)
AMENDMENTS 1996, 2000, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2018, 2022, 2023, 2024

1. The aim of the Society is to hold an Annual Bonfire Celebration, in the tradition of Sussex, with a procession, bonfire and fireworks display on a date as agreed by the members.

2. A street collection shall be made on the same date, the proceeds of which will go to benefit local charities, associations and organisations.

3. The Society shall be non-profit making. The cost and expenses of the Celebration will be met by the fundraising activities of the Membership.

4. Membership

The first year of membership of the Society will be a probationary one and conduct and contribution to the Society will be monitored and reported. All new members **MUST** attend the first meeting of their membership. Membership must be paid before participating in any processions as an RBS member.

4a. Membership of the Society shall be paid by subscription and open to those aged 18 years and over, subscriptions payable between the AGM and by **the 31st of October**. No **new** members will be accepted after the last society meeting in October, until the Bonfire season completes.

4b. Existing members who do not pay their subscription by the date of the Annual Bonfire Celebration that year will have their membership 'held over' until the AGM of the following year. Should that member then fail to pay their subscription by the 31st of October for that following year, then their membership will lapse and they will have to apply for a new membership.

4c. Honorary Membership will be granted for a 12 month period to those non-members who give service to the Society (no voting rights).

4d. Life Membership can be awarded to a member who has given long or exceptional service to the Society (full voting rights and executive committee status). This membership will include children under the age of 18 named on the membership renewal form.

5. Children in the Society

RBS actively encourages children of members to get involved and learn about the various aspects of the society, what Sussex Bonfire is about and what we do to both prepare for our own event and what to do when attending other societies events.

5a. Children under 18 years old can only participate with the permission of their parent or guardian, recorded on a membership form. A parent's\guardians' signature is needed to be present for any child named. Non-parents can take out membership to incorporate children (grandparents/aunts etc), but the parent\guardian is still required to sign the membership form to approve the child's participation in the event. This rule is intended to enable young family members of existing bonfire members to participate, and not for a member to include a child's friends for one off events.

5b. Children must always be accompanied by a supervising adult member. In all cases, the supervising member is responsible and liable for the Child's actions. A supervising member is usually a family member such as a parent or guardian; but could also be another RBS adult member (over 18). The child can only accompany the latter with the permission of the child's parent or guardian. Responsible members must be in an appropriate condition to supervise effectively.

5c. Children should aim to march in the centre column of our ranks, flanked by adults. The responsible member for the child should be either in the column beside or in the row immediately behind the child. If the adult leaves the procession, the child must accompany them. No adult should supervise more than 3 children.

5d. RBS enforce no age limit for a child to carry a torch in the procession. The child's capacity and ability to do this must be judged and monitored by the responsible adult accompanying the child. If the child misbehaves or is involved in any incident, it is the responsible adult that will be responsible, and could be penalised by the society. This applies to all members under 18 years old. It is the responsibility of all RBS members to ensure our ranks are safe and maintained well, both at our event and out meetings, as such any RBS member that sees a child struggling or misbehaving with a torch is encouraged to inform their supervising adult or remove the torch from the child if this person does not act or is not immediately present. When attending out meetings, all members must adhere to the rules laid down by the hosting society (see rule 13), including those of age limits for children carrying torches should they differ to our own rules.

6. An Annual General Meeting shall be held in the month of April. The members shall elect from the membership a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and any other officers deemed necessary to conduct the business of the Society. The agenda will be as follows:

- To pass the audited accounts
- To accept the Chairman's report
- To elect the officers of the Society
- To transact any other business

7. Any changes to this Constitution may be made only at the AGM or at an Extraordinary General Meeting. Notice of such a meeting, and the proposed change, must be given in writing to Members three weeks in advance of the meeting.

8. That all Members accept the Sussex Bonfire Council rulings that:

- a) No fireworks should be carried or discharged.
- b) That the instructions given by Marshals, who will be clearly identifiable, will be closely obeyed at all times.
- c) That any persons expelled and banned from RBS will have their name passed onto the Sussex Bonfire Council to be circulated to other SBC member societies for their consideration and awareness when considering membership requests.

9. That any incident of failing to obey the rules of the Society, or a member being guilty of serious misconduct and/or bringing the Society into disrepute, will be the subject of investigation by the top table, potentially leading to being called before the Executive Committee and may be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including expulsion from the society.

10. That the first pioneer costume of the Society shall be the black and white Cistercian Monk's habit. In order to maintain the visual effect in processions, Members not in this costume will be asked to march at the rear.

11. The three formal and adopted dress codes at present are MONKS, RABBLE & ROMANS. It is required that the member's dress code should fall into these categories and MUST be fit for Bonfire purpose.

12. During any procession, whatever the dress code, there should be discipline during marching of maintaining lines of three, which will show off the Society in its best light.

13. That only members of the Society will be permitted to march in procession.

14. When attending out-meetings all members will abide by the hosting societies rules.

15. The Society's ways of working for fundraising and event management will evolve over time. Whenever possible, changes to these ways of working are agreed by members of the Society at a face-to-face meeting. However, the Directors of the Robertsbridge Bonfire Society Limited recognise their accountability and on occasion may have to make decisions out with a meeting e.g. with regards to finances, or health and safety matters. These decisions will be discussed retrospectively with members.

Guidance notes to Rule 6: - proposed recipient must be voted at an AGM, carry a minimum 80% vote by secret ballot.

Date: 18/4/2024