



Proposed alterations to the By-laws of the British Astronomical Association



This is to give notice (under the terms of Article of Association 33) that a Special General Meeting of the British Astronomical Association will be held at 14:00 on Saturday 20 January 2024 at the Institute of Physics in London, to consider and vote on the proposed alterations to the Association's By-laws detailed below.

The principal effects of these proposals will be to:

- (A) End the practice of members voting annually on the subscription rates for the next Session at a Special General Meeting (SGM);
- (B) Give the Board of Trustees the explicit authority to replace the traditional postal ballot for the Board of Trustees and Council with an on-line ballot only, and
- (C) Remove affiliated societies as a category of membership (though we will still have affiliated societies).

There are also some minor changes to clarify our procedures.

David Arditti, President

By-law	Current text	Proposed text	Reasons for change
<i>SUBSCRIPTIONS</i>			
3	At a convenient time in the Spring of each year the Board of Trustees shall make recommendations to a Special General Meeting in respect of the amounts, for the ensuing session commencing August 1, of the annual subscriptions for the various classes of membership. The Meeting shall decide upon these amounts.	At a convenient time in the Spring of each year the Board of Trustees shall make recommendations to the Council in respect of the amounts, for the ensuing session commencing August 1, of the annual subscriptions for the various classes of membership. The Council shall decide upon these amounts.	The requirement for the members to approve subscription rates at an SGM is out of line with the usual practice of membership charities today. The Board is the best-placed body to decide such matters, but it is desirable to have wider input into these decisions. Hence the proposal moves the final approval of the subscriptions from an SGM to the Council.
<i>VICE PRESIDENT</i>			
10	The immediate past President shall serve as Vice-President for the duration of their successor's term of office.	The immediate past President shall serve as Vice-President for the duration of their successor's term of office. If they wish not to do so, or are unable, Council shall choose a replacement for the Session.	We currently have no provision for the situation where the immediate past-President does not wish to serve as Vice-President for the whole of his successor's chosen term. This change makes such provision.
<i>TRUSTEES</i>			
13	No person may serve more than three consecutive years on the Board of Trustees, with the exception of years spent serving in the offices of President, Treasurer or Business Secretary, in which case they may serve no more than three consecutive years on the Board following the period for which they were qualified to serve on the Board by virtue of occupying these positions.	No person may be elected for more than three consecutive years to the Board of Trustees, with the exception of years spent serving in the offices of President, Treasurer or Business Secretary, in which case they may serve no more than three consecutive years on the Board following the period for which they were qualified to serve on the Board by virtue of occupying these positions.	Currently if a Trustee resigns and is replaced by the Council between elections, it is not clear when their three-year permitted term as a Trustee should be deemed to start. This change removes this doubt, making clear it is being elected for more than three consecutive years that is banned, also bringing the wording into line with that of parallel by-law 14 concerning the Council.
<i>ELECTIONS</i>			
15	The members of the Board of Trustees and the other elected members of Council shall be elected annually by ballot of the members of the Association which shall be taken at a convenient date not more than 14 days prior to the date fixed for the Annual General Meeting in any year. Such date shall be known as the Ballot Day.	The members of the Board of Trustees and the other elected members of Council shall be elected annually by ballot of the members of the Association.	The current wording assumes a traditional paper ballot. An on-line ballot does not require a counting day as it counts continuously, so the term 'Ballot Day' has been eliminated. The 14-day closing point has been moved to By-law 20.
16	Each year a notice advising the members of the conditions of the ballot and the last date for receipt of nominations for election to the Board of Trustees and the Council shall be placed in the February and April issues of the Journal. The notice shall also be sent to the last notified electronic mail address of each member. Should the serving President, Treasurer or any of the Secretaries have advised the Business Secretary that they do not intend to seek re-election, this information shall be included in the notice to the members.	Each year a notice advising the members of the nomination procedure and the last date for receipt of nominations for election to the Board of Trustees and the Council shall be placed in the February and April issues of the Journal.	This brings the wording in line with actual practice.

17	<p>Any two members of the Association may nominate any other eligible member as President, Treasurer, Secretary, Trustee or elected member of Council. Each such nomination that is accompanied by a statement that the nominee is prepared to serve if elected, and, in the case of those seeking election to the Board, has understood and accepted the legal requirements for Charity Trustees, and is received in writing by the Association before noon on the second Friday in May, shall be included on the Ballot List, unless withdrawn. A candidate may only stand for election to one position, except that a candidate for a non-Trustee position on Council may also stand for election as President, Treasurer, Secretary or as a Trustee.</p>	<p>Any two members of the Association may nominate any other eligible member as President, Treasurer, Secretary, Trustee or elected member of Council. Each such nomination that is accompanied by a statement that the nominee is prepared to serve if elected, and, in the case of those seeking election to the Board, has understood and accepted the legal requirements for Charity Trustees, and is received in writing by the Association before noon on the second Friday in May, shall be accepted as valid. A candidate may only stand for election to one position, except that a candidate for a non-Trustee position on Council may also stand for election as President, Treasurer, Secretary or as a Trustee.</p>	<p>The term 'Ballot List' implies a traditional paper ballot, so has been eliminated.</p>
18	<p>Following the closure of nominations under By-law 17 the Business Secretary shall prepare the Ballot List, taking into consideration the requirements of By-law 19 and the nominations received under By-law 17. Should too few nominations have been received to fill the nine places on the Board of Trustees, Council members shall introduce further nominations to appear on the Ballot List in order to fill these places.</p>	<p>Following the closure of nominations under By-law 17 the Business Secretary shall prepare the ballot, taking into consideration the requirements of By-law 19 and the nominations received under By-law 17. Should too few nominations have been received to fill the nine places on the Board of Trustees, Council members shall introduce further nominations to fill these places.</p>	<p>As above the term 'Ballot List' has been eliminated.</p>
19	<p>The Ballot List shall include all valid nominations for President, Treasurer, Secretaries (whose roles shall be individually specified) and other elected members of the Board and of the Council. The Ballot List shall state the position for which persons are nominated, followed by, in alphabetical order, the names of those nominated and not subsequently withdrawn, and the names of their nominators. The names of those nominated as Trustees or elected members of Council shall be combined alphabetically in one list and a mark (with an explanatory note) shall be put against the names of those standing for election as Trustees. The Ballot List shall contain instructions to voters to vote for no more than ten candidates in this combined list. Candidates' biographical notes shall accompany the Ballot List.</p>	<p>The ballot shall include all valid nominations for President, Treasurer, Secretaries (whose roles shall be individually specified) and other elected members of the Board and of the Council. The names of those nominated as Trustees or elected members of Council shall be combined alphabetically in one list and a mark (with an explanatory note) shall be put against the names of those standing for election as Trustees. Voters shall be instructed to vote for no more than ten candidates in this combined list. The names of nominators plus candidates' biographical notes shall be provided to voters.</p>	<p>As above the term 'Ballot List' has been eliminated, and there has been some simplification of wording.</p>
20	<p>The Ballot List shall be sent to each fully paid-up member in paper or electronic form at least 21 days before the Ballot Day, accompanied by instructions for the procedure for the ballot. No member may return more than one completed Ballot List. Paper Ballot Lists must be received at the Association's Office not later than noon on the Ballot Day.</p>	<p>The ballot shall be open for least 21 days and shall close not more than 14 days prior to the date fixed for the Annual General Meeting in any year. Members shall be given instructions for the procedure for the ballot. No member may complete the ballot more than once.</p>	<p>As above the terms 'Ballot Day' and 'Ballot List' have been eliminated</p>

21	<p>If an electronic voting system is available, members who wish to vote electronically may do so according to the instructions provided with the Ballot List. No member may vote more than once, and if a member votes electronically, any paper Ballot List also received from that member shall be deemed invalid.</p>	<p>The ballot may be conducted by post, by post and on-line, or only on-line, at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.</p>	<p>This change is to give the Board discretion over the mechanism of the ballot. The term 'electronic' has been replaced by the more general (and normal) 'on-line,' and as above the term 'Ballot List' has been eliminated. Consequent duplication with By-law 20 has been removed.</p>
<i>AFFILIATION</i>			
39	<p>Scientific societies, including observatories and local astronomical societies, and schools and other educational establishments, may, subject to the approval of the Council, be affiliated to the Association, and shall collectively be known as 'affiliated societies'. Neither affiliated societies nor their members shall have a right to vote in any election of the Association.</p>	<p>Astronomical or scientific societies may become affiliated to the Association subject to the approval of Council.</p>	<p>This change narrows the targets of affiliation and simplifies the wording.</p>
40	<p>Every affiliated society shall pay an annual subscription and shall be entitled to receive one copy of the publications of the Association that are normally distributed to members.</p>	<p>There shall be no fee for affiliation, neither shall affiliated societies or their members have voting rights at any meeting or in any election of the Association. The privileges of affiliated societies shall be determined from time to time by Council.</p>	<p>This change removes affiliation as a category of membership.</p>
41	<p>Members of affiliated societies are entitled to attend AGMs and SGMs of the Association. Such attendance shall confer no right to vote at such meetings.</p>	<p>[Remove this by-law]</p>	<p>Now covered under By-law 40.</p>