

# THE ESSEX SOCIETY FOR FAMILY HISTORY

Patron: The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford

Registered Charity Number 290552

## CONSTITUTION

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### 1. NAME

The name of the Society shall be 'The Essex Society for Family History'.

### 2. OBJECTIVES

- (a) The advancement of the education of the general public in the study of British Family History, Genealogy, Heraldry and Local History with particular reference to Essex.
- (b) To promote the preservation, security and accessibility of archival material.
- (c) In furtherance of the above objects, but not further or otherwise, the Society shall have the following powers:
  - (i) To hold lectures and discussions and organise research visits for Society members and members of the general public.
  - (ii) To hold and maintain a library of printed and other works for the use of Society members and members of the general public.
  - (iii) To preserve and transcribe or publish original source materials including documents and monumental inscriptions.
  - (iv) To pursue collaborative actions with similar societies and with established supportive bodies such as churches, libraries, record offices and educational institutions.
  - (v) To support the activities of the Federation of Family History Societies in its pursuit of these and similar objectives.
  - (vi) To cause to be written and printed or otherwise reproduced and circulated gratuitously or otherwise such papers, books, periodicals or other documents or films or recorded tapes, (whether visual or audio or both), as shall further the said objects.
  - (vii) To do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the attainment of the said objects.

### 3. AFFILIATION

The Society shall be affiliated to the Federation of Family History Societies, also known as the Family History Federation, and with other organizations whose objectives are compatible and mutually supportive.

### 4. MEMBERSHIP

- (a) Membership of the Society shall be open to all persons showing genuine interest in the support of the Society's objectives. Application for membership shall be on the prescribed form.
- (b) Classes of membership: These shall be determined by the Executive Committee of the Society and may include such categories as: (1) Ordinary Member, (2) Family Member, (3) Institution, (4) Honorary Member (to be conferred for distinctive services as agreed by the Executive Committee).
- (c) Subscriptions shall be payable at the time and at the rate determined by the Executive Committee.
- (d) The Executive Committee may suspend from membership any member whose activities are determined to be prejudicial to the Society. Such a member may have the right of appeal to a panel appointed by the President.

### 5. ADMINISTRATION

- (a) The Society shall be administered by an Executive Committee (the Charity Trustees) consisting of the Officers, ex-officio members and elected members to a total of not more than sixteen (16) plus the total number of branches. The Officers of the Society shall be the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. All members of the Executive Committee are the Managing Trustees of the Charity. A quorum at any Executive Committee meeting shall consist 50% of its membership plus one. Only fully paid up members of the Society shall be eligible to be members of the Executive Committee
  - (b) The Executive Committee members, defined in 5(a), shall be elected annually by the membership. Their term of office commences at the end of the General Meeting, normally the Annual General Meeting, at which they are elected.
    - (i) Nominations for all these positions must be made in writing, approved by the nominee and signed by the proposer and seconder, who must be fully paid up members. They must be received not less than twenty eight (28) days before the date of such meeting. Nominations will be posted on the ESFH website on receipt. If no nomination has been so received to fill any vacancy the Chairman of the meeting may take nominations from the floor.
    - (ii) The President and Vice-Presidents will be appointed by the Executive Committee and such appointments shall be ratified at the Annual General Meeting. Such appointments shall be for one year only. Anyone serving as a Managing Trustee shall not be eligible.
  - (c) The electorate shall consist of all fully paid-up members and Institution Members, all of whom being entitled to one (1) vote if in attendance at the General Meeting where the voting is to be conducted. Members unable to attend in person may instruct the Chairman of the meeting to cast a vote on their behalf for their preferred candidate(s). Such instruction must be sent, in writing to the Secretary, by email or letter, to be received in the 28 days preceding the meeting.
  - (d) All Officers and Executive Committee Members shall be eligible for re-election annually, subject to 5(f). The Executive Committee may co-opt members at their discretion. The total number of co-opted members shall not exceed one third of the Executive Committee.
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- (e) The Chairman of the Executive Committee and the Chairmen of the Branches of the Society shall be in office for not more than five (5) consecutive years. They shall not be eligible to serve as Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee or any formal Branch of the Society for a period of one (1) year after leaving that office. If a Chairman does not complete five (5) years in office, it shall be deemed as five (5) years. Chairmen shall be elected annually.
- (f) The Society's Executive Committee shall have the power to establish branches for the furtherance of the Society's objects. Each branch so established shall comply with and be subject to the following regulations.
  - (i) The branch shall act in pursuance of the objects and policies of the Society and shall be subject to such conditions as may from time to time be laid down by the Society's Executive Committee. The administration of a Branch shall be carried out by a Committee of fully paid up members.
  - (ii) All subscriptions to the Society shall be deemed to be monies of the Society. They may be collected through branch officers.
  - (iii) The branch will be represented at the Society's Executive Committee Meetings by the Branch Chairman, or by a nominee of the Branch, who will be an ex officio member of the Executive Committee with full voting rights.
  - (iv) The Society shall provide funds to a branch appropriate to its size and activities. A branch may, with the prior agreement of the Society's Executive Committee, open a bank/building society account which shall be run in accordance with the policy laid down by the Society. The monies in the branch bank/building society account shall at all times remain the monies of the Society as a whole. The branch accounts must be kept in such form as may from time to time be determined by the Society's Executive.
  - (v) All printed material, microform, monies and any other assets, however acquired, held by any branch shall be the assets of the Society. No such assets may be sold, lent or disposed of in any way without the authority of the Society's Executive Committee. Any expenditure by any branch in excess of a limit to be determined by the Executive Committee must have prior approval of the Executive Committee.
  - (vi) A branch may be suspended at any time by a resolution of the Society's Executive Committee and upon suspension shall cease all operations and any liabilities, monies or assets under its administration shall be frozen until a resolution has been approved dissolving the branch or otherwise, at a General Meeting.

### 6. GENERAL MEETINGS

- (a) An Annual General Meeting shall be held during each financial year when the officers shall present their reports. Notice of this meeting shall be given at least fifty six (56) days prior to this event.
- (b) An Extraordinary General Meeting may be convened at the request of the Executive Committee or at the request of twice that number of ordinary members. The business to be discussed must be set out, in writing, to members at least fifty-six (56) days before the meeting.
- (c) A quorum at such a meeting shall consist of not less than the number of members determined by the Executive Committee to be representative of normal monthly attendance at headquarters during the preceding year, e.g. 70% of the average attendance. Decisions at such a meeting shall be by simple majority.

### 7. CONSTITUTION

The Constitution can be altered or amended only at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society for which proper notice has been given and then only if the proposed alteration or amendment receives at least three-quarters of the votes of members present and eligible to vote, provided that no such alteration or amendment shall cause the Society to cease to be a Charity at law. No alteration shall be made to clause two (2), clause seven (7) or clause nine (9) without the prior approval of the Charity Commissioners. Proposals for constitutional amendments shall be submitted to the Society's Executive Committee at least fifty-six (56) days prior to the first day of the month in which the Extraordinary or Annual General Meeting is to be held.

### 8. FINANCE

- (a) All income and property of the Society shall be applied solely towards the promotion and execution of the objectives of the Society as defined in clause 2 and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly in any manner by way of profit to any member of the Executive Committee of the Society providing that nothing herein shall prevent reimbursement of reasonable and proper out of pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the Society.
- (b) The Executive Committee shall cause proper books of account to be kept with respect to all sums of money received and expended by the Society and the matters in respect of which such receipts and expenditures take place.
- (c) The Society's accounts shall be subject to independent examination annually. A copy of those accounts shall be presented to all members of the Society.

### 9. DISSOLUTION

The Society may be dissolved by a resolution passed by not less than three-quarters of those members present with voting rights at a General Meeting called for that purpose and for which twenty-eight (28) days prior notice has been given. Such a resolution may give instructions for the disposal of any assets held by the Society after all debts and liabilities have been paid. The balance left to be transferred to other charitable institutions having objectives similar to those of the Society.

### 10. HOLDING TRUSTEES

The Holding Trustees of the Society shall be the Officers of the Society for the time being namely the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer together with the Charity Correspondent of the Society.

Holding Trustees are appointed to hold the legal title of Society property.