

Kent Family History Society Constitution Revised 2011

1. Name:

The society shall be called Kent Family History Society, hereinafter referred to as “the Society”. It may also be abbreviated as “KFHS”.

2. Aims:

To promote and encourage education in the study of family history, genealogy, local history, social history and heraldry with particular reference to the county of Kent.

3. Powers of the Executive Committee:

- a, To arrange lectures, courses, research visits, and exhibitions.
- b, To promote the preservation, transcription and accessibility of archival material, and whenever possible publish such documents.
- c, To hold and maintain a library of printed and electronic works for use by Society members.
- d, To provide guidance in family history to those with family history interests.
- e, To liaise with other similar organizations and with libraries, archives, record offices, churches and educational bodies.
- f, To publish a journal.
- g, To establish or dissolve branches of the Society. There shall be three types of branch:
 - i, Local branches**; open to any member of the society. Local branches shall organize regular meetings and must elect at each Branch Annual General Meeting a committee to conduct its affairs. Procedures for the conduct of local branch meetings shall be the same as laid down for Society meetings, except that dates and numbers for a quorum may differ. Each branch shall maintain an assets register and a copy to be submitted to the Treasurer annually with the Branch accounts. Local branches shall each nominate one member of its committee to sit on the Executive Committee.
 - ii, Overseas branches**; open to any member residing in that country. Overseas branches may hold meetings if they wish or publish a newsletter. Their arrangements for appointment of Officers will be as agreed by the Executive Committee.
 - iii, Postal/on-line branches**; open to any member of the Society. Postal/online branches are not required to hold regular meetings. The arrangements for appointment of Officers will be as agreed by the Executive Committee.

The Society will provide funds to each branch, appropriate to its size and activities, the amount of such funds to be decided by the Executive Committee. Each branch shall account for its funds annually to the Society Treasurer and such funds remain the assets of the Society. Each Branch accounting year shall be 1st April - 31st March. Should a branch be dissolved all of its remaining assets will be deemed assets of the Society.

- h, To appoint postholders as agreed by the Executive Committee. Job descriptions for postholders will be issued by the Executive Committee as necessary. Any postholder must be approved by the Executive Committee prior to commencing their duties. Each postholder shall submit a report to the Secretary not less than fourteen days before each Executive Committee meeting.

- i. To appoint Overseas Agents as agreed by the Executive Committee.
- j. To collect and raise funds by subscriptions, donations, grants etc and by sales of published documents.
- k. To purchase, rent or lease and to maintain a building or buildings for purposes relating to furthering the aims of the Society.
- l. To employ such staff as may be necessary to further the aims of the Society, and to comply with current employment and Health and Safety legislation.
- m. To call an Extraordinary General Meeting as may be necessary.
- n. To undertake any other lawful pursuits in furtherance of the aims of the Society.

4. Membership:

- a. Membership shall be open to any person who is willing to support the aims of the Society, and shall be those persons whose names for the time being are entered in the Register of members.
- b. There shall be five types of membership:
 - i, Individual membership** - open to anyone. Individual members shall have one vote in any election or meeting.
 - ii, Joint membership** - open to two adults living at the same address and willing to accept one copy of the journal and any other circulated material. Each of the two members shall have one vote in any election or meeting.
 - iii, Corporate membership** - open to libraries and other bodies who will receive one copy of the journal and any other circulated material but who will not have a vote in any election or meeting.
 - iv, Honorary membership** - awarded at the discretion of the Executive Committee in recognition of services to the Society. Honorary members shall have one vote in any election or meeting.
 - v, Any other such category of membership as the Executive Committee may from time to time decide.**
- c. All applications for membership or renewal shall be on the prescribed form as agreed by the Executive Committee.
- d. The Society will maintain a list of members which includes their addresses and other contact information. This may be in electronic form. It will be used only for the Society's administration purposes and will not be sold or given to any third party.
- e. All notices, including those published in the journal, will be sent to the last notified address of each member. It shall be the duty of each member to keep the Society informed of any change of address or other contact information. All letters and notices dispatched by post to a member at the address registered in the list of members shall be deemed to have been delivered.
- f. The Executive Committee may appoint an Honorary President and the Executive Committee may also invite suitable persons to become Honorary Vice-Presidents or Patrons.
- g. The Executive Committee may, by a two thirds majority, have the power to terminate, or suspend for such period as it thinks fit, the membership of any member who is in breach of

any of the parts of this constitution, or whose activities they judge to be detrimental to the aims of the Society, or to reprimand a member for any infringement of the constitution. The individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by a disciplinary committee accompanied by a friend, for the purpose of note taking in a passive, not active, role only. The disciplinary committee shall consist of any Executive Committee members not directly involved with the allegations. All membership fees for the current year which have been paid by any member whose membership is terminated will be repaid.

5. Management:

- a, The Society shall be administered by an Executive Committee consisting of four honorary Officers, (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) and up to six ordinary elected members and one nominated member from each local branch. All Executive Committee members shall be fully paid-up members of the Society.
- b, The Officers and six ordinary members shall be elected to the Executive Committee at Annual General Meeting. The election of each Officer and Executive Committee member shall be decided by a majority of votes recorded. Where nominations exceed vacancies voting will be by ballot. Each local branch shall further nominate one of its committee members to sit on the Executive Committee.
- c, No ordinary Executive Committee member may serve for more than six years continuously without a break of at least two years unless elected to an Officer position. No Officer, other than the Treasurer, may serve in the same capacity for more than four consecutive years.
- d, To maintain a consistency of Executive Committee members the ordinary Executive Committee members will normally be elected on a three year cycle; cycle A, cycle B and cycle C with terms of office to start from the conclusion of that Annual General Meeting.
- e, Any member shall have the right to make nominations, with the written consent of the candidate, for election to any one or more offices on the Executive Committee. Nominations for election at Annual General Meeting should be submitted to the Secretary in writing not less than twenty one days before the Meeting, but if the number of nominations is less than the number of vacancies the Chairman may accept further nominations at the Meeting.
- f, Any casual vacancy on the Executive Committee may be filled by co-option. A co-opted member shall take up the cycle of the vacancy he or she is filling.
- g, No person who has been convicted of fraud, or who is an undischarged bankrupt shall be eligible for election.
- h, No person who is under eighteen years of age shall be eligible for election.
- i, Any person who becomes incapable of managing his or her own affairs by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury for a period of six months or more shall cease to be a member of the Executive Committee and the vacancy may be filled by co-option.
- j, Any person who fails to attend three consecutive Executive Committee meetings without good reason acceptable to the Executive Committee shall be deemed to have resigned from the Executive Committee and the vacancy may be filled by co-option.

- k, The Executive Committee shall meet at least three times each year. A quorum shall be seven members including at least one Officer.
- l, Every member of the Executive Committee must sign the minute book of the Executive Committee at the start of the first meeting attended following each Annual General Meeting, co-option, or nomination by their branch, as an acceptance of the position and a willingness to serve in the best interests of the Society.
- m, The Executive Committee may appoint sub-committees or working parties as it deems necessary. Such sub-committees or working parties will operate under the authority of the Executive Committee to whom regular reports must be submitted and whose prior approval is required for any expenditure. Non members of the Society may be appointed to such sub-committees or working parties but their numbers must not exceed one third of the total number of that sub-committee or working party.
- n, All minutes of the Executive Committee, Annual General Meeting, or Extraordinary General Meeting shall be taken and entered into the minute book. They shall be confirmed at the next appropriate meeting and signed by the chairman of that meeting. The minute book shall be held by the Secretary.
- o, Voting at Executive Committee meetings will normally be by show of hands; a simple majority is sufficient. The Chairman to have a second casting vote if necessary.
- p, Individual members of the Executive Committee shall declare any personal or financial interest in any matter under discussion and shall not vote on the matter in question. If felt appropriate they may be asked to leave the room whilst the matter is discussed.

6. Meetings:

- a, An Annual General Meeting shall be held within the Ceremonial County of Kent every calendar year, normally during the month of October, but in any event within fifteen months of the previous meeting. The Executive committee shall give notice in writing to every member, normally by means of the journal, of every Annual General Meeting not less than four weeks beforehand. Motions for the Annual General Meeting, signed by a proposer and seconder, should be submitted to the Secretary not less than twenty one days before the Meeting. The chairman of the Meeting may, at his or her discretion, accept any other motion on the day providing it is duly proposed and seconded.
- b, At each Annual General Meeting:
 - i, The Executive Committee shall present a report of the activities of the Society since the previous Annual General Meeting.
 - ii, The Treasurer shall present the independently examined accounts of the Society for the previous financial year.
 - iii, The Treasurer will nominate a suitably qualified person or persons to act as Independent Examiner to the Society for the ensuing year.
 - iv, The Meeting will discuss and vote on any motions properly proposed and seconded.
 - v, The Meeting will elect Officers and Executive Committee members for the ensuing year.
 - vi, Any other appropriate business may be discussed.
- c, The electorate for an Annual General Meeting, shall consist of any member of the Society who is present at the meeting and whose subscription for the current year is fully paid before the date of the meeting. Voting shall normally be by show of hands and a simple majority will suffice except for motions to amend the constitution or to dissolve the Society, in which case

two thirds of the votes cast are required. The chairman of the meeting will have a second casting vote if necessary and a declaration by the Chairman to the effect that the motion has been passed, or not passed, shall be final and binding on all members.

- d, The Executive Committee shall have the power to call an Extraordinary General Meeting, and shall be bound to issue notice of such a meeting within four weeks of receiving a written request signed by at least twenty five members of the Society. The Executive Committee shall give notice in writing to every member not less than four weeks before that Extraordinary General Meeting. The business under discussion must appear on the agenda and no other business may be discussed. In all other respects the constitution relating to Extraordinary General Meetings shall be the same as for Annual General Meetings.

7. Finance:

- a, The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the financial and other assets of the Society. These assets shall be directed solely to the furtherance of the Society's Aims.
- b, The funds of the Society may be invested in Trustee Securities, bank or building society accounts as agreed by the Executive Committee.
- c, No funds may be directly or indirectly transferred to the profit of any Officer, Executive Committee member or ordinary member except as reimbursement of reasonable and proper expenses incurred on behalf of the Society.
- d, Each postholder shall hold a budget as agreed annually between the postholder, the Treasurer and the Executive Committee. Budgets shall not be transferrable without the specific approval of the Executive Committee.
- e, There shall be an annual meeting between budget holders and the Treasurer before the start of each accounting year to formulate budget proposals to submit to the Executive Committee.
- f, The approval of the Executive Committee is required, in advance, for any financial expenditure. Financial commitments incurred by any individual member or sub-committee will only be entertained if previously agreed to by the Executive Committee whose decision shall be final. Routine expenditure, such as journal printing and meeting room hire will not need specific approval for each occasion.
- g, In the case of urgency, approval for expenditure may be made by the Officers by email.
- h, Cheques and other documents relating to Society funds shall be signed by any two of the four Officers, one of whom should normally be the Treasurer, with the exception that cheques for less than £500 may be signed by the Treasurer alone. In no case may the payee named on a cheque be authorized to sign that cheque.
- i, The Treasurer may operate online banking so long as any payment has previously been agreed in principle by the Executive Committee.
- j, The Executive Committee, or the Treasurer on its behalf, shall cause proper accounts to be kept of all monies received and expended by the Society. These accounts shall be independently examined and presented to members at the Annual General Meeting each year. The accounting year shall be 1st April - 31st March.

- k, Each Branch will be allocated funds as agreed by the Executive Committee whose decision shall be final. Each branch Treasurer shall cause a proper account, independently examined by the Society Treasurer, or other suitable person, during the four weeks prior to the Branch's Annual General Meeting, to be kept. Each Branch Treasurer shall close the branch account to 31st March each year and submit the account to the Treasurer as soon as possible within the month of April.
- l, The Executive Committee shall maintain an assets register, an insurance register and a contracts register to be held by the Treasurer. All concerned shall be responsible for informing the Treasurer of any changes.

8. Indemnity

The Society shall indemnify the Officers and Executive Committee members, and any ordinary member acting with the authority of the Executive Committee, from and against all claims, liabilities and demands which are for any act done in good faith on behalf of the Society.

9. Insurance

The Executive Committee shall effect proper, appropriate and necessary insurance cover for the Society's assets including any buildings or motor vehicle. The Society shall also effect proper public liability cover and employer's liability cover if appropriate.

10. Trustees

The Executive Committee may appoint a minimum of three members, normally the four Officers, to act as Trustees if necessary to enter into any contract on behalf of the Society in respect of holding land or buildings.

11. Subscriptions:

- a, Annual subscriptions shall be payable on joining the Society and thereafter on or before 1st July annually without notice. The Executive Committee may, at its discretion, accept that for a member joining late in the Society's annual year the first subscription paid will cover the period to 30th June in the following year.
- b, The amount of annual subscription, and of any administrative fee paid by any new or re-joining member, shall be decided at an Annual General Meeting and shall remain in force until amended by resolution of a similar meeting.
- c, Any member who fails to pay their subscription by the 31st of August will be deemed a non member. If they subsequently rejoin they will incur the same administrative joining fee as a new member would.

12. Training

Appropriate training shall be made available to any Executive Committee member or postholder to enable them to best fulfill their role within the Society. The cost of such training should be approved by the Executive Committee in advance and borne by the Society

13. Amendments to the Constitution:

- a, Any change to the constitution must be made at Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting at that Meeting.

- b, Any such resolution, setting out the terms of the proposed amendment, must be put in writing to all members and distributed with the notice of the Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting.

14. Dissolution:

The Society may be dissolved only by a resolution passed at Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting at that meeting. Any remaining assets after the Society's liabilities have been met shall be transferred to some other organization having similar aims to the Society.