



Constitution of Hastings Writers' Group

As amended and agreed at the Annual General Meeting on **06/01/2025**

Clause 1: Name

The name of the association is Hastings Writers' Group (hereafter referred to as 'the Group').

Clause 2: Administration

An elected Committee is charged with the responsibility of administering and managing the affairs of the Group in accordance with the clauses of this Constitution as set out below.

Clause 3: Aims and Objectives

To encourage general interest in, and the practice of, good writing, whether for publication or otherwise, by providing a varied and stimulating programme and a friendly and supportive atmosphere.

Clause 4: Membership

1. Any adult interested in writing may apply for membership, in line with the principles of Equal Opportunities, and may attend one meeting first without charge or obligation, subject to any agreed maximum membership levels.
2. Members will be charged the appropriate subscription and meeting fees as agreed at the relevant Annual General Meeting.

3. Any member not paying the membership subscription within two months of the due dates shall be deemed to have resigned from the Group, unless a fees waiver/patrons bursary has been agreed.
4. Members are expected to show respect to each other. An individual's membership may be suspended or terminated where conduct is considered by the Committee to be unacceptable or not in the best interests of the Group. The Committee's decision in such cases is final.
5. On rare occasions, Honorary Membership may be proposed and granted for longstanding and exceptional service to the group. Such members will be exempt from annual subscriptions and meeting fees.
6. Membership of Hastings Writers Group will be limited to 45 fee-paying members (plus any additional Honorary Members). A waiting list will be kept for any new member requests once 45 members have joined and paid their annual fees.

Clause 5: Committee

1. The Committee will be elected by the Group at the Annual General Meeting and will consist of a minimum of 5 members to include: Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Treasurer, Programme Secretary and Membership Secretary, plus any other members (postholders or non-postholders) voted in, subject to any agreed maximum.
2. Any group member may stand for election to the Committee providing they are officially nominated and seconded. Where more than one member is standing for the same post a ballot will be held.
3. The Committee may co-opt additional members if required, for specific advisory responsibilities, but co-opted members will not have Committee voting rights.
4. If a Committee member resigns before the Annual General Meeting, another member may be proposed and voted in by the Group to fill the vacancy.
5. All members of the Committee will stand down at each AGM, but may stand for re-election if they so wish.
6. Other non-committee posts may be created as agreed and will be subject to the same procedures.

Clause 6: Committee Meetings

1. At least two members of the Committee are needed to hold a quorate committee meeting. Where possible 14 days' notice should be given, unless the matters to be discussed are urgent and a shorter time period is agreed.
2. An agenda of items to be discussed should be prepared and distributed in advance.
4. The Chairperson or Deputy will chair Committee meetings, but if both are absent, then a volunteer from the remaining elected committee members can be chosen.
5. For a decision to be valid, a majority vote from Committee members is required. In the event of an equal divide, the Chairperson will have an additional casting vote.
6. Minutes or notes of Committee meetings are to be taken and distributed to all Committee members. A copy should also be kept in the Group's Minutes file and be available for any Group member to peruse on request.
7. Decisions taken by the Committee shall be relayed to the Group at the earliest opportunity.

Clause 7: Funds

1. General funds shall be paid into accounts administered by the Treasurer, who will keep a record of all income and expenditure and produce reports as necessary.
2. Accounts are to be in the name of Hastings Writers' Group and all payments made must be signed by an authorised signatory. All committee members may become authorised signatories and there must always be at least three authorised signatories (including the Treasurer).
3. The Treasurer will circulate a report of all bank transactions to the committee on a monthly basis.
4. General group funds may only be used to further the objectives of the Group, as approved by the Committee.
5. Additional accounts may be held if required, and administered by at least two appointed members for specific agreed purposes.
6. Any out-of-pocket expenses, or authorised expenditure, should only be reimbursed by the Treasurer on production of an approved Expenses Claim.

7. The annual financial year runs from the 1st of January to the 31st of December.

Clause 8 Annual General Meetings

1. The Annual General Meeting will take place in early January, with the date to be agreed by the Committee and publicised as part of the annual programme of events.
2. Details of the AGM, its agenda and proposals must be sent to all members no later than one week prior to the meeting.
3. If a committee post is contested, proposed and seconded nominations for committee posts must be received by the chair at least two weeks in advance of the AGM. Further nominations will not be considered after this date. Exceptionally, late nominations will be accepted if the alternative would be to leave an essential committee post unfilled.
4. Every member (paid-up or honorary) of the Group has the right to speak and vote at the AGM. Absent members may vote by e-mail or in writing providing their votes are received by a specified time in advance of the meeting.
5. The Chairman or Deputy will chair the AGM or, if both are absent, then another member of the Committee will preside.
6. Minutes should be taken of this meeting and made available to members on request.
7. The Chairperson, and where appropriate other postholders, will present their annual reports.
8. The Treasurer will present a report containing the annual statement of accounts and propose the budget for the coming year.
9. The annual subscription, membership levels, meeting fees, and any other financial matters for the forthcoming year will be reviewed
10. Members will vote in the new Committee and any other postholders as agreed.
11. Any other business, as raised by one or more Group members, will be discussed.

Clause 9: Group Meetings

1. Meetings of the Group are detailed as set out in the Programme for the year.

2. All members have the opportunity to fully participate, subject to any exclusions as defined in the programme.
3. Visitors may attend some meetings by arrangements and on payment of the agreed visitors' fee, but are not eligible to enter competitions.

Clause 10: Extra-ordinary Meetings

1. An Extra-ordinary General Meeting may be called if at least 10 members request such a meeting.
2. 21 days' notice in writing must be given where possible, and the notice must state the business to be discussed.

Clause 11: Complaints

1. Any complaints concerning either individual members or group issues should be made in writing to the Committee for investigation and proposed action, which should then be relayed to the full Group.
2. Any member whose conduct is considered unacceptable should be given a verbal warning, followed by full details in writing.
3. Suspension of an individual to allow investigations, or termination of membership, may be agreed by the Committee.
4. An opportunity to meet with the Committee before any final decision is made should be offered on request within an agreed time limit, where possible not exceeding three weeks.
5. All complaints must be taken seriously and discussed where appropriate at a Group meeting.

Clause 12: Termination of the Group

In the event of Hastings Writers' Group being unable to continue for any reason, the Committee and any existing Group members should meet to decide on termination and what to do with existing assets.

Clause 13 Amendments to Constitution

Amendments to this Constitution may only be made after discussion and agreement by the Committee and ratified by the Group membership at the AGM

Document Control:

This amendment to the Constitution - to increase membership to 45 - was proposed by the Committee and adopted at the Annual General Meeting on 06/01/2025

Committee Members Present:

- Sam Davey (Chair)
- Jonathan Buckmaster (Treasurer)
- Joanna Harper (Membership Secretary)
- Tim Barlow (Programme Secretary)
- Colin Davey (Anthology Secretary)
- Liz Caluori (Hasting Young Writers)