

# Our Constitution



[Info@balcombeecologicalsociety.co.uk](mailto:Info@balcombeecologicalsociety.co.uk)  
[www.balcombeecologicalsociety.co.uk](http://www.balcombeecologicalsociety.co.uk)

*Adopted 12th June 2026*

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# 1. Name

The name of the group shall be 'Balcombe Ecological Society'. Throughout this document, Balcombe Ecological Society shall be known as:

- Balcombe Ecological Society
- BES
- The group

# 2. Aims

- Provide environmental education.
- Host environment days featuring wildlife-related guided walks, conservation days, and talks.
- To conserve land adopted by the group on behalf of another body.

# 3. Objectives

The group will fulfil these aims by:

- Liaising and working with Balcombe Parish Council, Balcombe Church of England School, Mid Sussex District Council, and West Sussex County Council. As well as any other organisation or company within reason.
- Assisting with practical maintenance and conservation projects.
- Setting members' subscription fees at rates that are appropriate to cover expenses.
- Organising meetings, training courses, and events.
- Representing the group in local and national forums.
- Affiliating with voluntary sector bodies for training and expertise.

# 4. Membership

- The group shall not be aligned to any political party.
- Members of the group shall be open to anyone, regardless of race, age, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or disability, who is interested in helping the group achieve its aims and willing to abide by the rules of the group.
- A person shall be considered a 'Member' of the group upon receipt of their completed membership application and subscription. Every member shall have at least 1 vote at general meetings, provided that they are above the age of 16.
- Individuals under the age of 18 or unable to afford full membership shall be offered a discounted rate of membership. This will be on a case-by-case basis.
- The Management Committee shall have absolute discretion to refuse membership to an applicant where it is considered such membership may be detrimental to the aims, purposes, or activity of the group.

- The Management Committee may terminate or suspend the membership of any member if in its opinion their conduct is prejudicial to the interests of the group, provided that the individual member or representative of the organisation shall have the right to be heard by the Management Committee before the final decision is made.

## 5. Management

- The group shall be run by a Management Committee of no less than three but no more than ten members elected at the group's Annual General Meeting (AGM). Committee members must be at least 16 years old. The Secretary shall invite proposals for the election to the Committee, and for the election as Committee officers, and circulate proposals prior to the AGM.
- Nominations for the election of officers shall be made in writing or by email at least 7 days before the AGM. Such nominations must be supported by a 'Seconder'.
- The election of officers shall be completed prior to the election of further committee members.
- The officers of the Management Committee shall be the Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer and such other officers as the group shall deem necessary at a general meeting, and shall be elected at the AGM.
- The Chairperson shall oversee the Committee's activities and represent the interests of the group in external matters.
- The Secretary shall conduct the correspondence of the group and shall have the custody of all documents belonging to the group. They will keep correct minutes of all proceedings and records of all activities of the group.
- The Treasurer shall keep the accounts of the group and shall make up the annual statements of accounts (and balance sheet) of the group to the 31st day of March in each year.
- Committee members may only be removed from the group with 3/4s of the majority vote or unless they retire. They may stand for re-election at the next AGM.
- The Committee shall meet at least twice a year. The appropriate officers will be informed of the date and time at the earliest opportunity.
- At least three Committee members must be present at the meeting for it to be considered quorate.
- Voting shall be by a show of hands. If the vote is tied, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.
- The Committee has the power to set up sub-groups and working parties as deemed necessary that shall be accountable to the Committee.
- The Committee may, whenever it considers that it does not have the knowledge or skills to perform adequately, co-opt up to five additional members to join the Committee.

## 6. Code of Conduct

- Every member, including Committee members, is expected to behave with courtesy and respect towards others.
- Members should conduct themselves in a manner which does not damage or undermine the reputation of the group and should not take part in any activities that are in conflict with the group's activities.
- The Committee may refuse or terminate membership if there is a good and evidence-based reason to consider that the participation of an applicant, or the continued participation of a Member, would be detrimental to the group's activities, reputation or proceedings. Such reasons might include, but are not limited to, bullying, illegal activities, disruptive behaviour, and harassment.
- Any member that believes they have been the object or victim (whether directly or indirectly) of another Member's misconduct should report the issue to the Chairperson, who shall refer it to the Committee. If the Committee decides that it should be pursued, it will nominate Committee members to investigate the allegations.
- If, on receiving the investigators' report, the Committee considers that the termination of membership of a Member should proceed, a motion to that effect will be placed on the agenda for the next (but not the same) meeting of the Committee, and the Member in question may, at the discretion of the Committee, be invited to attend for that item to address the Committee directly, if they wish to do so. After hearing the Member, if they attend, the Committee will discuss and vote on the matter. The Member will be notified in writing or by email within seven days of the Committee's decision. The decision of the Committee shall be final.

## 7. Finance

- Any money held by or on behalf of the group shall be used only in the pursuance of the group's aims and objectives.
- Any bank accounts opened for the group shall be in the name of the group.
- Any payment over £250 to be made by any means, such as electronic transfer, cash, or cheque, must be approved in writing by at least two Committee members.
- The Committee will ensure the group stays in budget.

## 8. Annual General Meeting

- The group shall hold an AGM at no more than 15-month intervals.
- Where possible, Members shall be notified by post or email; otherwise notice will be deemed served by advertising the meeting on the group's social media platforms, giving at least seven days' notice.
- No later than seven days before the AGM, the Secretary shall circulate to Members the agenda for the AGM, together with ballot papers for completion where there is to be an election of new Committee members.
- The business of the AGM shall include:

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- Receiving a report from the Chairperson on the group's activities over the year.
- Receiving a report from the Treasurer and presentation of the group's finances of the past year.
- Electing new Committee members and Officers if required.
- Members unable to attend the meeting may offer apologies for absence - though this is not required for non-Committee members.
- Any business not on the agenda may only be accepted and discussed at the discretion of the Chairperson, and no resolutions may be passed relating to or arising from any such additional items.
- Copies of the meeting minutes shall be uploaded to the group's website.

## **9. Extraordinary General Meeting**

If necessary, the Committee may call an extraordinary general meeting. The Secretary must notify all members, giving at least seven days' notice and the reason for said meeting.

## **10. Alteration of the Constitution**

- Proposals for amendments to this constitution or dissolution must be delivered to the Secretary in writing and signed by at least three Committee members.
- Any amendments to this constitution must be agreed by at least two-thirds of members present and voting at any general meeting.

## **11. Dissolution**

The group may be wound up at any time if agreed by two thirds of those members present and voting at any general meeting. After all debts have been discharged, any assets remaining shall be returned to their providers, if they require it, or shall be passed to another group or charity with similar aims.