

THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF MALTA
L-GĦAQDA MALTĪJA TAL-ASTRONOMIJA

STATUT

STATUTE as approved on 25 March 2015

1. **TITLE**

The name of the organisation is: ***L-Għaqda Maltija tal-Astronomija*** or **The Astronomical Society of Malta**, (henceforth referred to as **The Society**).

2. **EMBLEM**

The emblem of the society shall be as portrayed by this statute as:



DECLARATION

The Society is a registered voluntary organisation

3. **OBJECTIVE**

The Society is established **to promote and propagate education and interest in the science of Astronomy**, in particular to:

1. Organise lectures, courses, discussions, observing sessions and/or similar activities. These may be open to non-members of the society;
2. Encourage observational work and projects for its members;
3. Publish astronomical literature as may be desirable from time to time.
4. Promote co-operation with other local and overseas societies.

4. **MEMBERSHIP**

4a. Any person, subject to **Rule 4f**, may become a **Society member**:

1. Upon payment of the membership fee; and
2. Upon approval by the Committee.

4b. The **membership fee** of each Society member shall be such a sum as the Committee may determine from time to time.

4c. All membership fees shall become due as from the **first week of January**.

- 4d. Any person joining the Society during **the period of three months before** the forthcoming membership fee is due, will not be requested to pay the membership fee.
- 4e. **Outgoing members** of the Society shall pay any outstanding dues and return all property and material of the Society borrowed by them.
- 4f. The Committee may, *at its discretion*, **refuse any application** for membership or **suspend or cancel the membership** of any member, provided that this person be afforded the opportunity to appear before the Committee.
- 4g. Application for new membership shall be made on the membership form as prescribed by the Committee.
- 4h. Junior members below 16 years may benefit from a reduced subscription rate as decided from time to time by the Committee.
- 4i. There shall exist a class of membership called 'honorary membership' which shall be bestowed upon those persons (including non-members of the Society) who have made a significant contribution to the advancement of astronomy in Malta and/or to the promotion of the Astronomical Society of Malta.

Honorary membership shall be awarded by the Annual General Meeting upon recommendation of the Society committee. Honorary members are exempt from paying the yearly membership dues.

Honorary members of the Astronomical Society of Malta (as of March 2015):

1. Dr Patrick Moore (deceased)
2. Prof Frank J. Ventura
3. Br David Mizzi
4. Prof Godfrey Baldacchino
5. Mr Tony Tanti

5. **THE COMMITTEE**

- 5a. The management of the Society shall be entrusted to a body called the Committee. This body shall convene at least once every six weeks. If, for any reason, the President is unable to convene the Committee, the Vice-President shall take over this duty. All decisions regarding the Society (except for the changing of the Statute) shall be taken by the Committee. Any decision on issues on which there is not a unanimous agreement between the Committee members shall be decided on the basis of a simple majority vote between Committee members present.
- 5b. The Committee shall consist of **at least five members**. These will include a:
 1. President
 2. Vice-President
 3. Secretary
 4. Treasurer *and*
 5. Public Relations Officer.
- 5c. **The President** shall chair every Committee meeting of the Society and shall have the right to know of all Society proceedings. The President shall be a member '*ex-officio*' of any sub-committee or section of the Society.

- 5d. **The Vice-President** shall assist the President in his duties, without prejudice to **Rule 5c**. The Vice-President shall replace the President when thus delegated by the President.
- 5e. **The Secretary** shall keep the minutes and later distribute them to all Committee members within reasonable time prior to the holding of the subsequent meeting. The Secretary will be responsible for the Society's Committee correspondence. He/she shall inform all Committee members of forthcoming Committee meeting and of their respective agenda. The Secretary shall also keep the minutes of any *Annual General Meeting* or *Special General Meeting* (henceforth **AGM** and **SGM** respectively).
- 5f. **The Treasurer** shall be responsible for all the Society's financial affairs and for drawing up a balance sheet to be presented to the AGM. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the organisation of fund-raising activities for the Society.
- 5g. **The Public Relations Officer** shall be responsible for the Society's relations with the mass media, other astronomical societies and the general public.
- 5h. The Committee may fill any **vacancies** in the Committee, which may occur between one AGM and another.
- 5i. The Committee may, in the interests of the Society, **co-opt additional members** on the Committee.
- 5j. A Committee member will be asked to **resign from the Committee**, if considered to have failed to carry out his/her duties for a period of time without reasons, held justifiable by the rest of the Committee or by two-thirds of the Society's members.
- 5k. **Three** members of the Committee, including either the president or Vice-President, shall form a **quorum** for Committee meetings.
- 5l. The Committee may keep, in the name of the Society, one or more **bank accounts**. All revenues should be deposited into a Savings Account. All withdrawals, transfers from the Savings account to other accounts as well as cheques issued must be signed by the Treasurer and the President or his/her delegated member of the Committee.
- 5m. The Committee shall present a report of the **state of affairs** of the Society during the previous year to the AGM.
- 5n. The Committee shall annually submit the accounts of the Society for examination. **The audited accounts** shall be presented to the AGM as a financial report. The Committee will decide as to who will audit the accounts. Auditors must not be members of the outgoing Committee or contestants in the election for the forthcoming Committee.
- 5o. Persons may be invited by the Committee to act as **observers** during a Committee meeting of the Society.
6. **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**
- 6a. The **AGM** shall, unless the Committee otherwise decides, **be held during the month of January** each year, for the purpose of presenting *a report of the state of affairs* and *proceedings of the Society* during the previous year and for *the purpose of electing a new committee*.

- 6b. The Committee shall forward to all members **at least two clear weeks** before the date fixed for the AGM :
1. The date, time and place of the forthcoming AGM;
 2. The date, time and place of adjournment of the AGM, if the case arises;
 3. The names of the retiring members of the Committee;
 4. The date and time up to which the Secretary shall accept motions to be presented at the AGM, including proposals for amendments to the statute and proposals for inclusion on the AGM Agenda;
 5. The name and address of a person appointed by the Committee to receive applications for candidature of the above-mentioned elections;
 6. The closing date for the receipt of the above-mentioned applications;
 7. A copy of the application form to contest for election, subject to **Rule 7g**;
 8. Any other matters concerning the AGM.
- 6c. The president or his delegate or, in the absence of either of these, a chairperson appointed by the Committee, shall **chair** the AGM or SGM, subject to **Rule 6d**.
- 6d. **The Rules of Procedure** of the AGM or SGM shall be:
1. The Committee shall be responsible for setting up the Agenda in accordance to **Rule 6e**.
 2. The chairperson may suspend individual members and/or suspend or adjourn the AGM or SGM in case of disorder, as he sees fit and proper.
 3. The secretary of the incumbent Committee or, in the case of his absence, any other person appointed by the Committee, shall be responsible for the keeping of minutes during the AGM or SGM.
- 6e. **The Agenda of the AGM** shall contain the following:
1. The Chairperson shall declare the AGM open;
 2. Reading of minutes of previous AGM;
 3. Presidential Report of the previous year;
 4. Administrative Report of the previous year;
 5. Public Relations Report of the previous year;
 6. Financial Report, including assets, of the previous year;
 7. Motions and proposed amendments to the statute;
 8. Nomination of an Electoral Commission;
 9. Election of a new Committee by secret ballot;
 10. Any other matters.

6f. A **simple majority** shall approve **any decisions** taken during an AGM or SGM **except** those concerning amendments to this statute.

Each paid up member present will have a single vote.

6g. **Special General Meetings** may also be convened:

1. When the Committee deems it fit and proper;
2. When a request, **signed by at least one third of the Society's members**, is addressed to the Committee, containing the reason for which the SGM is being requested. The meeting shall be held within **fifteen (15) days** of the receipt of the above mentioned request.

6h. The Committee shall forward to all members **at least one clear week** before an SGM is due the following:

1. The date, time and place of the forthcoming SGM;
2. The date, time and place of adjournment, if the case arises;
3. The date and time up to which the secretary shall accept motions to be presented at the SGM, including proposals inclusion in the SGM Agenda;
4. Any other matters concerning the SGM.

7. ELECTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

7a. The **term of office** of the Committee **expires** after one year. Any Committee member is eligible to contest for re-election.

7b. Five Committee members, in accordance to **Rule 5b and 5h**, shall be **elected annually**. In the event of the resignation, death or demotion resulting from **Rule 5j, Rule 5h** applies.

7c. The annual Committee election shall be conducted by and shall be the responsibility of an **Electoral Commission** (the **EC**).

7d. The EC shall consist of at **least two members** of the Society not contesting the forthcoming election. It shall be **proposed** by the outgoing Committee and **approved** by the **majority** of members present at the AGM.

7e. The EC's word shall be **final** in that:

1. It refuses applications for candidature of elections, if these applications do not conform to the rules of this Statute;
2. It appoints assistants to help in performing its duties;
3. It takes any decisions relating the elections.

7f. **Every candidate** who shall contest for Committee election must be a **registered paid up** Society member.

- 7g. The names of the candidates shall be submitted in writing to the person appointed for this purpose in **Rule 6b(5)**. The signature of the candidate and of two seconders who shall be Society members shall accompany the submittance.
- 7h. On the day fixed for the election, each member present shall **vote by a secret ballot** for **not more** than five (5) of the candidates, who are to sit on the Committee.
- 7i. **Voting papers** signed by the EC shall be used for election purposes. Votes shall be deposited by voters in an appropriate ballot box.
- 7j. The EC shall publish the **election results** immediately. In the event of a tie, the EC shall proceed to hold a bye-election between those candidates who have secured an equal number of votes.
- 7k. The five (5) candidates securing **the greatest number of votes** in the election shall be declared elected.
- 7l. Any **grievances** as to the running of the election shall be submitted in writing to the EC not later than **four (4) days** from the announcement of the final election results. At the discretion of the EC, fresh elections may be held.
- 7m. A **meeting** of all elected members shall be held **not later than one week** following the announcement of the final election result. At this meeting, the members shall decide who will occupy which of the posts mentioned in **Rule 5b**, starting with that of President. If a Committee member wishes it, the election of any Committee official shall proceed by a secret ballot.
- 7n. The **outgoing Committee** shall hand over, within a stipulated time frame agreed with the newly elected Committee all materials, funds and Society matters.

8. **DISSOLUTION**

Should the Society decide at a general meeting to dissolve, all assets, books, funds and other Society possessions at that time shall be sold by auction among members. Items not sold shall be valued and sold to the public. The net surplus derived in this way shall be applied in favour of another voluntary organisation with similar purposes as the Society which may be selected by the administrators members, or the Court.

9. **AMENDMENTS**

- 9a. The secretary shall notify members, **at least one week before** an AGM or SGM, of **proposals** for the amendments to the Statute.
- 9b. **Any amendments** to this Statute, including this Rule, can be made at an AGM or at a SGM. It must be carried by a **two-thirds majority** of those members present.

10. **AFFILIATIONS**

Other societies may be **affiliated** to the Society subject to a set of regulations which are agreed upon by the Society Committee and **without** prejudice to this Statute.

11. **SECTIONS**

- 11a. The Committee may, in the interests of the Society, appoint sub-committees, groups and/or expert teams which may be made up of society members and/or professionals to undertake tasks required by the Society.
- 11b. **Articles of Association**, governing the objectives, programme, organisations and other matters pertaining to the operations of these sub-committees, groups, sections and/or expert teams, are to be drawn up and agreed upon by the Committee and the **Designate Director** of the aforesaid sub-committee, group and/or expert team.
- 11c. The **Director** of a sub-committee, group, section and/or expert team shall be a Society member appointed by the Committee for a period, which can be renewed, of twelve (12) calendar months. The Director will be directly responsible to the Committee for all matters relating to the sub-committee, group and/or expert team under his direction. The Director and/or his delegate are entitled to attend all committee meetings of the Astronomical Society of Malta but have no voting rights.
- 11d. Articles of Association of sub-committees, groups, sections and/or expert teams of the Society shall be **appended** as such to the **Society Statute**. Such articles will carry the **date** of the approval by the Committee on which the said sub-committee, group and/or expert team will be deemed to have been officially established.
- 11e. Sub-committees, groups and/or expert teams of the Society will be **guided** in all matters by the articles and spirit of the Society Statute currently in force or as may be amended from time to time.
- 11f. All such sub-committees, groups, sections and expert teams must maintain a record of their main points deliberated during their meetings, as well as a detailed financial record (if applicable).

12. MISCELLANEOUS

- 12a. In exceptional circumstances, and unless this Statute declares otherwise, the **President** or his delegate will be deemed **to have power to take decisions regarding the Society management**. The President's delegate shall be a Society member. Any such decisions shall be reported to the Society Committee at the forthcoming Committee meeting.
- 12b. **The affairs of the Society** shall be regulated by this Statute. All Society members may be provided with a copy of this Statute and shall abide by it.

Date: 25 March 2015

Annex A

THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY METEOR GROUP

Articles of Association as proposed on **14th December, 1993** and subsequently approved, with amendments, by the Committee of the *Astronomical Society* in February 1994. Published in the *Astronomical Society Newsletter*, February 1994, pages 6-8.

By this agreement, there is hereby established The Astronomical Society Meteor Group (referred to below as the ***Meteor Group***).

A OBJECTIVES

1. To develop a **sustained effort** and **specialisation** in **meteor observation, research** and **analysis**.
2. To promote the **development** of a dedicated team of meteor watchers with a strong interest in **quality** meteor work.
3. To **participate** in and **organise** local, regional and international activities, which deal with the promotion of knowledge and interest in meteors and meteor, related affairs.
4. To **disseminate** information and research findings with the aim of enhancing interest in meteors and meteor related affairs locally and internationally as well as to **establish** Malta as a centre of excellence in meteor work.

B PROGRAMME

1. A **schedule** of intensive observation of particular meteor streams, in collaboration with other societies abroad.
2. **Projects** intended towards the **investigation** of scientific and non-scientific aspects of meteor history, observation, research and analysis.
3. **Participation** in international fora, encounters and exchanges, including conferences, seminars, projects and publication submissions.

C ORGANISATION

1. The Meteor Group will be **administered** by a Director **appointed** by the Committee of the Astronomical Society for a period, which can be renewed, of **twelve (12)** calendar months. The Director will be directly responsible to the Committee for all matters concerning the Meteor Group.
2. The Meteor Group will be entitled **to raise and administer its own funds** as well as to apply for *supplementary* funding from the Astronomical Society, provided that:

- a. The Meteor's Group accounts will be **audited** separately but along with the rest of the Astronomical Society's accounts at the end of each financial year;
 - b. The Astronomical Society, at the beginning of each financial year, allocates to the Meteor Group a ceiling, which will represent the Astronomical Society's total, maximum financial commitment to the Meteor Group during that year.
5. The Astronomical Society may decide to **dissolve** the Meteor Group either with a **majority** of votes taken during an Annual/Special or Extraordinary General Meeting; or following a proposal to that effect by the Meteor Group Director.
 6. The Meteor Group Director will have **the authority to establish bye-laws** for the running of the Meteor Group's activities, without prejudice to any other article herein.

D MISCELLANEOUS

1. The Meteor Group will be **guided** in all other matters by the articles and spirit of the Statute of the Astronomical Society (Malta) currently in force or as may be amended from time to time.
 2. Copies of **results obtained from projects** organised by the Meteor Group shall be presented to the Committee of the Astronomical Society for safekeeping and archival purposes in the Society Library.
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