Humanism in Scotland

Constitution & Standing Orders

Introduction & Summary:

In this document, the following words and meanings apply: 'HinS' or 'Org' always means 'Humanism in Scotland'.

'Exec' refers to those responsible for all aspects of its Administration & Operation. The Exec has sole discretion to take all decisions, including establishment, funding and management of all operations and related activities, including charitable works. The Exec has the authority to delegate any of its functions and powers to such other person or persons as it may deem appropriate and in such matters, any such person or persons will be fully accountable to the Exec. The Exec may also agree by majority vote, to establish, affiliate to and/or support any organisation it believes necessary to enhance its activities, including, but not limited to:

- **Furthering the awareness, understanding and relevance of the humanist life stance, promoting and supporting humanist values in mainstream Society including at national and local Statutory, Charitable and 3rd Sector Voluntary sectors;**

- **Promoting and supporting in Scotland, local and/or national campaigns which enhance the well being of Scotland's people, flora and fauna;**

- **Providing a focus for the practice of humanist philosophy, activity and people empowerment along with a facility for its members and like-minded supporters to engage socially across cyber media etc, and discuss and/ or act on relevant issues and concerns;**

- **Donating as appropriate to other organisations in furtherance of the objectives and policies of the Org.**

1. **Name - The organisation shall be known as Humanism in Scotland and is established for the advancement of humanist philosophy, beliefs and relevance by:**

a. Promoting its vision in Scotland; namely to achieve a society in which the worth, dignity and autonomy of every person is valued and respected, compatible with the rights of others, and that individual freedoms are balanced with personal and collective social responsibility and a duty of care for future generations and our planet.
b. Advancing the philosophy of a secular Scotland, in which no belief system, religious or otherwise, should have nor expect privilege in the democratic process.
c. Promoting within Scottish civic institutions, democracy and the development and protection of equality, diversity and human rights.
d. Supporting national and international campaigns for the well-being of humanity, expressing where appropriate in the public sphere, the humanist viewpoint on issues and concerns in accordance with its beliefs, values & actions.
e. Encouraging ethical and moral problems to be addressed with compassion, experience, knowledge and reason.
f. Operating as a self-sustaining/not-for-profit organisation with a transparent charitable humanitarian outreach.

2. **In furtherance of its Objects and Vision, Humanism in Scotland shall endeavour to:**

a. Promote the establishment of a secular society;
b. Promote secular ideals in all state-funded education;
c. Promote, provide and develop a range of non-religious rites of passage, from which charitable donations may result.
d. Extend the contributions made by humanists to a wide range of mainstream social, civic and healthcare providers;
e. Maintain, develop and empower its members and advocates to carry out these and other activities which promote and support the vision of the 'Org'; and
f. Work with and/or support financially, other like-minded organisations and charities in the UK, Europe and Internationally.

3. In carrying out the above OBJECTS, HinS may exercise all or any of the following:

a. To undertake any activities that support the OBJECTS of the Org;
b. To encourage, provide, support and otherwise facilitate the work of others in the OBJECTS of the Org;
c. To cooperate with and enter into appropriate engagement and arrangements with any authorities, national, local or otherwise;
d. To attract, recruit and retain demand-related supporter activists.

4. Mode of Operation:

a. The work of the Exec will be based on equity, respect, transparency, good communication and accountability, enhancing open communication, trust and good relationships in accordance with the code of conduct.
b. Each Office Bearer's view will be fully respected and considered as part of the Org's deliberations, with a focus on constructively discussing issues.
c. When posing an issue or a problem, the Exec should always endeavour to present a solution.
d. There will be regular communication with Humanists International, its affiliates and local equality & diversity organisations to ensure relevant matters are brought to the attention of the Org.
e. An AGM will be held within 3 months after the end of each financial year.

5. Human resources, etc:

a. Membership of HinS is open to those whose life stance, commitment and skills may directly contribute to the Objects of the Org.
b. HinS shall appoint Office Bearers to manage and be responsible for the affairs of the Org.
c. Office-Bearers must be current members of the Org, who affirm the Humanist Declaration of decrees and principles as agreed/confirmed at the most recent Humanists International General Assembly / Tri-annual World Humanist Congress.
d. Office Bearers must have of their own volition, affirmed the provenance of the ethos of humanism.

e. Members shall be given a copy of the HinS Constitution and Standing Orders on induction.
f. Appendix relating to Hr/Celeb/Fiscal policy

6. Office Bearers - The Exec

a. The Office Bearers shall be the Chair, the Vice-Chair (as appropriate), the Secretary and the Treasurer. Members also fulfil the roles of Celebrants & Outreach, Publicity & Media; Training & Development; FE/HE/Schools Liaison; Hosting Meetings.
b. Organisation of events and activities is expected to be shared equitably.
c. The Office Bearers shall hold office for the period from the end of one annual general meeting to the end of the next. Exec members shall stand down each year but are eligible for re-election.
d. Office Bearers are expected to provide a month of hand-over support to those newly elected.
e. The Chair, supported by The Exec, shall provide leadership to the Org, ensuring that the Org fulfils its role and remit in furtherance of its Objects.
f. The Secretary shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration and communication in the Org, keeping all members informed of activities and events.
g. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the supervision of the funds, expenditure and charitable donations of the Org, keeping accounts of its income, expenditure and balance sheet for submission to the AGM.

7. Commitment. Accountability and Reporting of Office Bearers

a. The Office Bearers shall be appointed at the AGM.
b. The Office Bearers shall manage the affairs of the Org in accordance with the policies established at General Meetings, always mindful of evidence of the need for specific response or change.
c. If any Office Bearer dies, resigns, is off on long-term maternity or illness, or is asked to stand down, then the Office Bearers may reallocate those duties to a substitute until the next AGM.
d. Office Bearers are expected to prepare for and attend/contribute at quarterly meetings, regular members' meetings and the AGM.

e. Office Bearers are encouraged to take every opportunity to advocate on behalf of the Org, to give occasional presentations, or otherwise publicise and promote the work of the Org, for which support and training will be provided as required.
f. Office Bearers are expected to help with the organisation and delivery of any programme of events, activities and invitation to speakers.
g. Office Bearers are expected to bring agenda items to the attention of the Secretary for inclusion at the next most appropriate meeting.
h. A system of approval applies as agreed by the Office Bearers, with regard to any external communications (such as newsletters, press releases etc)
i. If consensus is beyond reach, Office Bearers present may decide by vote on the matter under consideration. Short-life work groups may be formed from time to time as required: eg - as a way of resolving differences etc.
j. Where appropriate, meetings or sub-groups can include advisors and support, out-with the Org.
k. Any Office Bearer who fails to attend two consecutive meetings without good reason will be asked if that signals their wish to step down.
l. In recognition of carbon footprint, face-to-face meetings may be supplemented or replaced by online discussion, email communication, telephone or video conferencing or such-like, given requisite access to the relevant technology.

8. Annual General Meeting

a. HinS shall hold an Annual General Meeting within 3 months after the end of the financial year, which shall be open to all members.
b. Notice of the date of the AGM shall be given to all members at least 42 days before the intended date of the meeting, by separate notice. This notice shall include the timetable of submission dates as determined by Standing Orders.
c. The HinS financial year shall be the fiscal year, from April to April. The Celebrant year will be from January to December inclusive. At the AGM, the Org shall:
d. Appoint the Office Bearers of the Org who will thereupon act as its Exec;
e. Receive and review reports by the Chair and Secretary on the work of the Org for the preceding financial year;

f. Receive and review a report by the Treasurer on the finances of the Org, and if appropriate, approve the accounts of the Org for the preceding financial/ fiscal year;
g. Consider such other motions properly submitted in terms of Standing Orders.

9. Special General Meeting

a. A Special General Meeting of the Org may be called by the Chair, or another Office Bearer, specifying the matter or matters upon which they wish the Org to take a decision.
b. If a Special General Meeting is called, it shall be held as soon as practicable.
c. The Secretary shall give all members of the Org, at least 14 days prior notice of the date, time and place of the meeting, and the precise purpose for which the meeting has been called.

Humanism in Scotland - Standing Orders

The business of the Org and the Exec shall be conducted in accordance with the following:

1. Amendments to the Constitution

This Constitution may be amended only by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority of members present at an Annual General Meeting, or at a Special General Meeting called for the purpose.

Within three months of any amendment being agreed, the Secretary shall intimate, by letter or other media, details to all members.

2. Dissolution of the Org

Any proposal for the dissolution of the Org shall be intimated in writing to the Secretary by not less than one-quarter of the members of the Org. The Secretary shall place the proposal on the agenda of the next Annual General Meeting or of a Special General Meeting if that has been convened or requisitioned for the purpose. Any such proposal shall require to be approved by a two-thirds majority of members present at the meeting at which it is considered.

In the event of dissolution, any funds remaining after payment of all debts of the Org shall be donated to Humanists International.

3. Chair

At the Annual General Meeting, at Special General Meetings and at all meetings of the Office Bearers, the agenda comes under the jurisdiction of the Chair, who failing the Vice-Chair, who failing a member appointed by a majority of those present.

4. Agenda and submission of motions for general meetings

a. The Secretary must receive motions for any General Meeting not later than 30 days before the date of the meeting. Each motion must be submitted in writing and signed by its proposer and seconder.
b. Notwithstanding 4.1 above, emergency motions may be moved in person at the meeting, only if it concerns matters that have arisen since the deadline has passed for submission of motions;

c. The Chair must rule that it is competent, or two-thirds of those present and voting agree that it should be debated. No motion or amendment shall be debated unless proposed and seconded in writing at the time of submission.
d. The provisional agenda for all General Meetings shall be issued to all members no later than 21 days prior to the date of the meeting.
e. The final agenda for all General Meetings shall be issued to all members no later than 7 days prior to the date of the meeting if it is materially different from the provisional agenda.

5. Procedure at meetings

Business shall be dealt with in the order in which it appears in the agenda unless the Chair with the agreement of the meeting decides otherwise.

a. Members wishing to raise business not on the agenda by means of an emergency motion must submit it in writing to the Chair not later than 30 minutes before the start of the meeting.
b. It shall be at the discretion of the Chair, either to rule such a motion as competent and sufficiently urgent for it to be raised at the end of the meeting or to direct that it shall be placed on the agenda of the next meeting.
c. Every motion must be put in writing and must be signed by the person proposing and seconding it.
d. Motions and amendments shall be discussed only after they have been moved and seconded by members present at the meeting.
e. The Chair may require amendments to be put in writing.
f. The Chair may judge an amendment to be incompetent and reject it.

g. Amendments shall be discussed and voted on before the original / amended motion is put to the meeting.
h. Amendments shall be voted on one at a time.
i. Movers of motions shall have a right of reply.
j. A direct negative shall not be a competent amendment.
k. An amendment calling for "No action" shall be voted on first. If "no action" is carried, the meeting shall proceed to the next business without further consideration of the motion or any other related amendment.
l. A proposal to remit any motion to the Office Bearers may be moved, providing notice is given to the Chair at the start of the debate. Remit back shall be voted on after the vote on all amendments and immediately before the vote on the substantive motion.
m. Any member who has not spoken in a debate may propose 'That the question be now put'. If this is seconded and the Chair thinks the question has had sufficient discussion, the Chair will order a vote on that proposal, without discussion. If this is carried, the proposer of the original motion will have the right of reply, and the question itself will then be put to the meeting. If the proposal that the question is now put is not carried, a similar proposal may be made after two further members have spoken.
n. Any member who has not spoken in a debate may propose 'next business' at any time. It shall be put to the vote immediately without debate and if carried by a two-thirds majority, the meeting will proceed immediately to the next item on the agenda.

6. Elections

a. If the number of nominees for any office is equal to or less than the number of places, there shall be a confirmatory vote by show of hands.
b. Where there is more than one nominee for any office, an election shall be by such method as the Chair with the agreement of the meeting shall decide.

7. Voting

a. Only members of HinS shall be entitled to vote at meetings.
b. Voting other than for elections shall be by show of hands unless the Chair directs otherwise.
c. Subject to 7d, the Chair shall have a casting as well as a deliberative vote.
d. A simple majority of those present and voting at a meeting shall determine the outcome of any matter voted upon unless the motion is for the amendment of the Constitution or Standing Orders or for the dissolution of the Org
e. In the event of a tied vote for the election of an Office Bearer, the result shall be decided by lot, in such a manner as the Chair shall determine.

8. Nominations for Office Bearers

Nominations for Office Bearers will only be accepted if seconded, having the prior consent of the nominee.

9. Notice of Executive Meetings

Notice of the date, time and place of each Executive meeting shall be sent to every Office Bearer by the Secretary not later than 28 days before the date of the meeting.

10. Quorum

a. The quorum at any General Meeting shall be two-thirds of those in attendance.
b. At a meeting of the Office Bearers, a quorum shall be one-third of its membership.

11. Conduct of Proceedings

The Chair shall conduct the meeting in accordance with the Standing Orders. If a question arises which is not covered by the Standing Orders, the Chair shall rule in accordance with the normal procedures of debate, and the Chair's decision shall be final.

12. Amendment of Standing Orders

These Standing Orders may be amended only by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority of members present at an annual general meeting, or at a special general meeting called for the purpose. A motion to amend these Standing Orders may only be submitted by an Office Bearer.

13. Suspension of Standing orders

Any one or more of the Standing Orders may be suspended by a motion relating to a specific item of business and the proceedings arising therefrom, provided that at least two-thirds of the members present and voting shall support the motion.

HinS Exec ~ December 2014 / December 2017 / December 2020