



CONSTITUTION (Version 4) of ALDE VALLEY SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

(as agreed at AVSFHG AGM, 21/6/21)

1. Name

The name of the Group is Alde Valley Suffolk Family History Group (the Group).

2. Aim

2.1 The primary aim of the Group is to promote the study of family history.

2.2 Consistent with the aim of promoting the study of family history, the Group may acquire relevant records for the use of its members. The Group may also secure facilities and purchase equipment as appropriate to support its activities and enable members to access its archives.

2.3 In furtherance of its primary aim and the interests of its members, the Group's committee will consider opportunities to collaborate with and attend events staged by other like-minded organisations.

3. Financial Year

3.1 The Group's financial year mirrors the calendar year.

4. Governance

4.1 Oversight of the Group's activities is the responsibility of a committee consisting of five senior officers (Chairman/Chairwoman, Vice-Chairman/-Chairwoman, Secretary, Membership Secretary and Treasurer) supported by a Programme Secretary, Publicity Officer and a number of other committee members.

4.2 Committee members, to a maximum of 12, are all elected by members at an Annual General Meeting (AGM).

4.3 The committee may co-opt additional members to serve for the current year. Co-opted members have full committee rights.

4.4 Committee meetings to review the Group's activities and financial health are held (and minuted). A quorum at such meetings is comprised of at least half of the elected committee, including a minimum of two senior officers as defined at 4.1 above.

5. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

5.1 The Group's AGM is held on or before the last day of April. In exceptional circumstances the committee may choose to delay the AGM beyond April, unless such delay is clearly prejudicial to the members' interests. The Committee may also elect to host the AGM online virtually.

5.2 The agenda for the AGM, to include any proposed changes to the Constitution, is sent out to members at least three weeks before the date of the meeting.

5.3 A quorum at the AGM is defined as the attendance of 10 members (including those present online virtually or by proxy) plus a quorum of current committee members as defined at 4.4 above.

5.4 The committee and the Group's members may recommend to the AGM any change to the Constitution felt to be appropriate.

5.5 Any non-committee member wishing to propose a revision to the Constitution for discussion at the AGM, must submit a proposal to the Secretary at least six weeks before the AGM. The proposal requires the support of at least three members, including the proposer.

5.6 The elected committee has a right to propose changes to the Constitution until three weeks before the AGM.

5.7 Decisions subject to a vote at the AGM will be determined by a straightforward majority of votes cast, with the exception of Constitution changes, that must be supported by two thirds of voting members present (in person or present online virtually or by proxy). In the event of a tie, the Chairman/woman has a casting vote.

5.8 Non-members may attend the AGM, although only paid-up members or their proxies may vote.

5.9 A decision made by the AGM is binding on all members.

6. Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

6.1 An EGM may be called at the request of the committee or at least ten members, by written notice to the Secretary.

6.2 An EGM will be held within 28 days from date of receipt of the written notice by the Secretary. Three weeks' notice of an EGM will be given to members.

6.3 Voting rights, the voting process and the impact of decisions on members are the same as those detailed under AGM above.

7. Membership

7.1 Membership of the Group is open to anyone with an interest in family history, upon completion of an application form and, subject to acceptance, payment of the appropriate subscription.

7.2 Acceptance or rejection of applications for membership is at the discretion of the Membership Secretary.

7.3 There are two categories of Membership: 1. Individual 2. Household

8. Subscriptions

8.1 Annual renewal of membership subscriptions falls due on 1st January, in line with the Group's financial year.

8.2 For new members joining from 1st October in the current year and paying the sole or household subscription in full, their membership will be valid until 31st December of the following year.

8.3 Subscription rates will be reviewed annually by the committee. Any proposed increase in subscriptions will require the approval of members at the AGM.

8.4 Annual subscriptions will be accepted by Cash, Cheque, Standing Order or Bank Transfer.

8.5 Members who wish to receive the newsletter by post shall have an additional £4.00 added to their annual subscription.

9. Communication

9.1 Upon joining the Group, new members will be asked to provide the following: telephone number, e-mail address and postal address. As a minimum, two of these will be required.

9.2 Communication from the Group will be via e-mail, unless a member does not have e-mail access.

9.3 Any communication sent by the Group to the last known address (e-mail or postal) of a member will constitute 'given notice'.

10. Events

10.1 The Group aims to organise family-history related events, including talks from visiting speakers and Group members.

10.2 Membership of the Group includes the benefit of a discounted admission charge to talks.

10.3 Admission charges to talks will be reviewed annually by the committee. Any proposed increase will require the approval of members at the AGM.

11. Social Media

11.1 The Group has established a closed Facebook Group to facilitate the sharing of family history interests via social media, particularly for those living in geographically remote locations, but with ancestral roots in Suffolk. Membership of the Facebook Group is open to all and acceptance is subject to two basic conditions: 1. The applicant has a connection with the Alde Valley Suffolk area and 2. Posts to the Facebook page are consistent with the aim of AVSFHG and are respectful of others.

Membership of the Facebook Group is not subject to a subscription and does not constitute full membership of Alde Valley Suffolk Family History Group.

11.2 The use of other social media platforms may be considered by the committee, as felt appropriate.

12. Finances

12.1 The Treasurer will be responsible for maintaining the Group's bank account, submitting a regular summary of the Group's financial position at committee meetings and preparing an annual statement of income and expenditure, for independent review, ahead of the AGM.

12.2 Reasonable expenses incurred by Group members will be reimbursed by the Treasurer, subject to submission of relevant evidence of such expenditure.

12.3 A cash-float, preferably not exceeding £50, is held by the Treasurer.

12.4 Four committee members, none of whom should be related or partners, are authorised as cheque signatories. All cheques require two signatures, one of which is preferably the Treasurer's.

13. Data Protection

13.1 The Group complies with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) in relation to the right to privacy of its members.

13.2 The Group's Privacy Policy can be viewed on the AVSFHG website.

13.3 The Group's procedure for handling alleged Data Breaches can be viewed on the AVSFHG website.

14. Complaints

14. Complaints relating to the Group's activities should be addressed in writing (letter or e-mail) to the Secretary, who will seek input from committee members in order to determine and prepare an appropriate response.

15. Removal of Members

15.1 A member may be expelled from the Group by the committee for conduct considered to be unacceptable.

15.2 The grounds for a proposed expulsion must be first communicated by a written warning, giving the affected member an opportunity to respond with details of any defence or mitigating circumstances.

15.3 An expelled member forfeits all membership rights (including the right to a refund of their membership fee) but has the right to appeal against expulsion, either in writing or in person to the next committee meeting, EGM or AGM. If attending in person, the expelled member may be accompanied by a supporter.

16. Dissolution

16.1 In the event that the Group is wound up, any surplus remaining after settlement of debts and realisation of assets will be donated to a charity of the committee's choice.

16.2 Consistent with its objectives, the Group is a member of the Family History Federation (FHF) for which it pays an annual subscription at the prevailing rate. This affiliation also obliges the Group to pay the FHF an amount of up to One Pound (£1) if the FHF is wound up or liquidated whilst the Group is a member, or up to 12 months after it has ceased to be a member.