

Dorset Mammal Group

Constitution of the group as a 'Small Charity'

1. Interpretation

The name of the charitable organization shall be the "Dorset Mammal Group" or such other name as the organization may from time to time decide. In this document, the 'Group' means 'Dorset Mammal Group' or such alternative name.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Group shall be to work for the conservation and protection of wild mammals in Dorset by:

- 2.1 maintaining records of the presence and activities of wild mammals in order to protect habitats from illegal interference and land development, to encourage protective measures at accident black spots, and to monitor the status of wild mammals in Dorset;
- 2.2 helping investigate cases of suspected persecution or habitat disturbance in liaison with all relevant authorities;
- 2.3 promoting public awareness of, and respect for, wild mammals;
- 2.4 providing advice and training for members and others in mammal-related matters;

3. Ethical considerations

The primary objective of the Group is to work for the conservation and protection of all wild mammals in Dorset but this requires clarification. Although the Group is opposed to recreational killing, there will be times when humane culling is widely seen as the best option in the interests of the *species* concerned (e.g. when man has been responsible for the removal of the top predator). There are also situations where action may be required to ensure the survival of endangered native species (e.g. red squirrels on Brownsea Island). The Group would look to guidance from the Mammal Society (see Section 9) in such circumstances.

4. Trustees

The charity shall be managed by a committee of trustees who are appointed at the Annual General Meeting of the charity.

5. Powers

In order to carry out the charitable objectives, the trustees have the power to:

- (1) raise funds, receive grants and donations
- (2) apply funds to carry out the work of the charity
- (3) cooperate with and support other charities with similar objectives
- (4) do anything which is lawful and necessary to achieve the objectives

6. Membership

The charity shall have a membership. People who support the work of the charity, and are aged 18 or over, can apply to the trustees to become a member. The trustees will keep an up-to-date membership list.

7. General Meetings

- (1) All members must be given 14 days notice of any general meeting. Members must be told what is on the agenda.
- (2) An Annual General Meeting (AGM) must be held every year. Minutes must be kept of the AGM.
- (2) There must be at least 10 members present at the AGM
- (3) Each member has one vote.
- (4) The trustees shall present the annual report and accounts at the AGM.
- (5) Any member may stand for election as a trustee at the AGM.
- (6) Members shall elect between three and 10 trustees to serve for the next year. They will retire at the next AGM but may stand for re-election.
- (7) If possible, members shall also elect three of the trustees to serve as chair, secretary and treasurer.
- (8) Either the trustees or a simple majority of paid-up members may call a special General Meeting.
- (9) Any proposal to change the constitution, or to wind up the charity, can only be made at a General Meeting.
- (10) All decisions made at a General Meeting require a two-thirds majority of those members present.

8. Trustee Meetings

- (1) Trustees must hold at least 3 meetings each year. At their first meeting after the AGM they will elect a chair, secretary and treasurer unless these positions have already been decided at the AGM. Trustees may act by majority decision.
- (2) At least 3 trustees must be present at the meeting to be able to take decisions. Minutes shall be kept for every meeting.
- (3) If trustees have a conflict of interest they must declare it and leave the meeting while this matter is being discussed or decided.
- (4) During the year, the trustees may appoint up to 2 additional trustees to serve until the next AGM.
- (5) The trustees may make reasonable additional rules to help run the charity. These rules must not conflict with this constitution or the law.

9. Affiliations

The Group will affiliate with the Mammal Society and will be guided by, but not bound by, its Terms of Reference and Position Statements. It will affiliate with the Badger Trust and may affiliate with other national and regional bodies as may be recommended to, and approved at, the AGM.

10. Money and property

- (1) Money and property must only be used for the charity's purposes.
- (2) Trustees must keep accounts. The most recent annual accounts can be seen by anybody on request.
- (3) Trustees cannot receive any money or property from the charity except to refund reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.
- (4) Money must be held in the charity's bank account. All cheques must be signed by the Treasurer and one other Trustee.
- (5) Winding up - any money or property remaining after payment of debts must be given to a charity with similar purposes to this one.