

# IRISH RAPTOR STUDY GROUP

## CONSTITUTION [2017]

- 1) Name                      The constitution makes provision for the “Irish Raptor Study Group” (hereinafter called “the Group”).
  
- 2) Geographical Area                      The Group area shall cover the Republic of Ireland as generally recognised.
  
- 3) Objectives
  - a.                      To promote and participate in Raptor fieldwork, defined as the study, survey and monitoring of Raptors (diurnal birds of prey, Owls and Raven) in the geographical area.
  - b.                      To promote the conservation and protection of all wild breeding and migrating Raptor species and their habitats primarily in the geographical area but elsewhere as the Group may decide;
  - c.                      To encourage research and monitoring of all Raptor species and the publication of such work where appropriate;
  - d.                      To raise awareness of Raptors, their conservation needs and the issues facing them;
  - e.                      To assist Group members with the above and co-ordinate members summary results;
  - f.                      To act as the parent body for the Group’s any Sub-Committee(s) or separate Provincial Branches;
  - g.                      To circulate the results of monitoring to outside individuals and bodies, to enhance the conservation of Raptors, but only if pursuant to the Group Policy on Data and Information;
  - h.                      To assist members with any licensing requirements relevant for the purposes of Raptor monitoring as issued by the National Parks & Wildlife Service or any successor body to it;
  - i.                      To set up and maintain a confidential nest recording scheme;
  - j.                      To co-operate as necessary with outside individuals and bodies in the furtherance of the above objectives.
  - k.                      To inform and assist An Garda Síochána and any other relevant bodies (governmental or non-governmental) with regard to known or suspected illegal Raptor persecution, nest interference, or other disturbance of Raptors.

4) Committee

The affairs of the Group shall be organised by a Committee elected annually by those Members attending an Annual General Meeting and shall consist of a) Chairman; b) Honorary Secretary; and, c) Honorary Treasurer and upto four other members.

The Committee shall power to co-opt up to a maximum of four other members. The Groups office bearers, all of whom other than the Treasurer shall be Full Members of the association. The Treasurer may be but is not required to be a Full Member. Any Sub-Committee or Provisional Branch Chair may act simultaneously as an office bearer of the Group.

The Group Committee shall hold meetings as and when it considers such meetings to be necessary but in any event its meetings shall take place not less than once in each calendar year. Decisions at such meetings shall be taken by not less than a 70% majority of those on the Group Committee members present or communicating their decisions by proxy, subject to a quorum of any number comprising more than half of all Group Committee members serving at any one time (provided that of this quorum a majority shall be Sub-Committee or Provisional Branch Chair(s) without which quorum valid Group Committee decisions may not be taken. In the event of not less than 10% in number of the Full Members of the Group subsequently objecting to any such decision, the Group Committee shall be obliged to reconsider the matter but thereafter its decision shall be final. The initial election of office bearers of the Group (in terms of the procedure set out below in this clause) shall take place at the first annual general meeting of the Group following adoption of this Constitution. The Chair, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer shall serve as such for initial periods of one year from the date of the first such Annual General Meeting but shall be eligible for subsequent re-appointment, whether for a term or terms of one year. Appointment of the Group Committee shall be through a process of annual or as the case may be, biennial approval by the Full Members whereby names of existing appointees for re-election and/or prospective replacement appointees for election are put forward to the Group Committee by Full Members. Full Members will have one equal vote each to choose the office bearers (re-appointed or new) to serve until the relevant Annual General Meetings for their retiral, these choices being formally ratified at such Annual General Meetings of the Group. In the event of a vacancy among the office bearers occurring other than through expiry of a term of office as aforesaid, the remaining members of the Group Committee shall temporarily fill such a vacancy from a person of their choice among the Full Membership of the Group. Any such temporary appointment shall continue until the next Annual General Meeting of the Group when replacement or re-appointment of that office bearer shall take place in terms of the procedure set out above in this clause.

The Group Committee shall have the following powers and duties:

- a) To borrow money and to give security in support of any such liability by the Group.
  - b) To engage such consultants and advisers as are considered appropriate from time to time.
  - c) To invest or deposit any funds which are not immediately or in the longer term required for the Group's activities in such investments or bank or other deposits as may be considered appropriate and to dispose of and vary such investments or deposits, all in the Group Committee's discretion.
  - d) To liaise with other voluntary sector bodies, local authorities, Irish government departments and agencies and other bodies, all with a view to furthering the Group's objectives.
  - e) To establish and/or support any charitable body with objectives similar to those of the Group and to make donations for any charitable purposes falling within the Group's objects.
  - f) To take such steps as may be deemed appropriate for the purpose of raising funds for the Group's activities.
  - g) To accept grants, donations and legacies of all kinds (and to accept any reasonable conditions attaching to them).
  - h) To carry on any other lawful activities which further any of the above processes.
- 5) Sub-Committees The Group Committee shall have the power to form Sub-Committees of the Group for such purposes as the Group Committee may decide and shall be responsible for appointing the Chairs and Members of such Sub-Committees. Sub-Committee Members (as well as Chairs) may also be Members of the Group Committee which shall have the power to decide the designation and duration of any Sub-Committees, their rules of procedure and (at all times) their Chairs and Membership.
- 6) Provisional Branches The Group shall provide advice and support to any individual Provisional Branches. These Branches shall hold and be responsible for their own Branch management and shall appoint their own office bearers, of whom there shall be at least a Chair and an Honorary Secretary. All Branch office bearers shall serve as such for a period of three years from the dates of their appointment but shall be eligible for re-appointment thereafter, for such length of time as the Branches may decide. The Branches shall further the Groups policies and the overall method of operating of the Group.

The Branches in conjunction with the Group shall submit relevant data (in such format as may be agreed from time to time) to the serving Group Monitoring Officer or to any successor monitoring scheme or (at the Group's discretion) other Project. Funds as may be agreed between the Group Committee and the Branches can be drawn down as reasonably required for the efficient working of the Branch.

The Branches can submit requests to the Group's Honorary Treasurer for monies into a relevant bank account of an office bearer of the Provisional Branch for purposes furthering the objectives of the Group. Receipts for monies received and costs incurred by the Branch should be recorded and retained and copies provided to the Honorary Treasurer. The Group Committee shall have the power to close down any Branch of the Group, for good and sufficient reason as to which it shall have sole discretion, but only after communicating such an intention to the Branch in question and after consultation with the other Branches of the Group. Following any such closure of a Branch of the Group the members of that Branch shall not pass themselves off as continuing members of the Group unless and until they have been accepted as such by one or more of the remaining Branches of the Group. The Group Committee shall have the right to form new or replacement Branches of the Group or to reinstate a previously closed down Branch, after consultation with all existing or remaining Branches.

7) Membership

There shall be three categories of membership of the Group, namely Full Membership, Supporting Membership and Honorary Membership. The entitlements of and regulations concerning these membership categories are as follows:

- a) Full Members shall be those individuals who are engaged in Raptor fieldwork of the Group and who, on a regular basis although allowing for temporary absence or illness, submit data (minimum one nest record per annum) to the Group or to any projects or specific national or regional surveys or monitoring programmes. Full Members joining the Group shall do so by virtue of undertaking Raptor fieldwork within the geographical area. Full Members joining one or more individual Provincial branches of the Group shall do so by virtue of undertaking Raptor fieldwork within the geographical area or areas of responsibility of such Provincial Branch or Branches. Full Members shall be entitled to attend the Group's Annual General Meeting at such level of payment as may be prescribed from time to time and all general meetings of the Group and meetings of Provincial Branches. Each Full Member shall have an equal vote in the management of the Group's affairs, to the extent that these are not delegated to the Group Committee under the provisions of this Constitution.
- b) Full Membership shall be at the discretion (as to both admission to and expulsion from such membership) of the Group Committee. For that purpose the Secretary shall provide to the Group Committee details of all prospective new Full Members. The Group Committee shall be entitled to consult with any Full Member sponsoring an applicant for such membership. If so required by the relevant branch, any applicant for Full Membership shall serve a period of traineeship (of whatever type and of whatever duration the Group may decide) prior to a decision by the Group as to acceptance of that applicant for such membership.

- c) The Group Committee shall have the overriding right, for good and sufficient reason as to which it shall have sole discretion, to refuse to admit any individual to membership of any category.
  - d) The Group Committee shall have the overriding right, for good and sufficient reason as to which it shall have sole discretion, to terminate the membership of any individual member of either category by written notice, providing that the individual concerned shall be entitled to be heard by the Group before a final decision as to such termination of membership is taken.
  - e) Each Full Member shall pay an annual membership subscription directly to the Group Honorary Treasurer of such an amount as shall be determined each year by the Group Committee at its first meeting following the preceding Annual General Meeting of the Group.
  - f) Honorary Members shall be those individuals who, for reasons of distinction in relation to Raptor conservation or past or present Raptor monitoring, the Group Committee consider should be granted such membership or be subsequently excluded from it. Honorary Members shall be entitled to participate in the Group's affairs to such an extent as the Group Committee may decide from time to time.
  - g) The Group Honorary Secretary shall maintain a register of members, setting out their full names, addresses (both postal and e-mail) and any other relevant (voluntarily submitted) contact details, the dates on which they were admitted to membership and the dates of cessation of membership. It shall be permissible for the content of this register (as to individual members) to be passed between and shared with members of the Group Committee, to other Sub-Committees or Provincial Branches of the Group for the purposes of the Groups objectives.
  - h) Any individual wishing to withdraw from membership from the Group shall send a signed notice to that effect to the Group Committee and shall cease to be a member on receipt of such notice by the Group Committee.
  - i) Members shall not act in any way that leads to conflict with the Group's objectives or policies, however stated.
  - j) No member shall be excluded from the Group on the grounds of gender, age, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation.
  - k) Decisions in terms of clauses 4 (b) – (g) of this constitution shall be taken by a majority vote of the Group Committee.
  - l) Any member who wilfully threatens the welfare or breeding attempt of any Raptor may be expelled from the Group.
- 8) Brand Values
- a) Members shall not make any statements publicly or on any media purporting or calculated to purport official policy, opinion or position of the Group; or use the Group logo as generally recognised without its express authority from the Group Committee or at least from collective written triumvirate agreement of the Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer.

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| Brand Values<br>(continued)     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) Each Member of the Group Committee will have equal right and access Group social media accounts and free opportunity to promote and issue general commentary on topics relevant to Clause 3 of the Constitution through public social online media platforms.</li> <li>c) Members shall not enter into any written signed contractual agreement or memorandum of understanding or financial arrangement with any other organisation, body, contractor or third party on behalf of the Group or use the Group logo for any purpose without the express authority from the Group Committee or at least from a collective written triumvariate agreement of the Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer.</li> </ul>  |
| 9) Functions of the Committee   | The main functions of the Group Committee shall be to promote the objectives of the Group in its geographical area; and, publish periodic newsletters and/or annual round up reports for distribution to Group members.   |
| 10) Chair                       | All meetings shall be chaired by the Group Chairperson if present or by a committee member proposed and approved by a simple majority of those attending, in the Chairperson's absence.   |
| 11) Management of the Committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A member of the Group Committee must declare any personal interest which he or she may have in any transaction or other arrangement into which the Group is proposing to enter. Consequently he or she will be debarred from voting on the matter in question. Should that matter be the subject of discussion at a Group Committee meeting, at the discretion of a majority of the other Group Committee members the member concerned may be required to leave the meeting for the duration of that discussion.</li> <li>b) Members of the Group Committee may be paid such remuneration as the Group Committee may decide and shall be entitled to be reimbursed for all travelling and other expenses reasonably incurred by them in connection with their attendance at meetings or the carrying out of their duties in general.</li> <li>c) Any member of the Group Committee may call a Group Committee meeting or request the Honoraray Secretary to do so. The Honoraray Secretary shall arrange for the meeting to take place as soon as practicable thereafter.</li> <li>d) The Group Committee may, at its discretion, allow any person who it reasonably considers appropriate, to attend and speak at any Group Committee meeting. Any such person shall not be entitled to vote at a Group Committee meeting.</li> <li>e) The Group Committee may delegate any of its powers to any Sub-Committee consisting of one or more Group Committee members and such other persons as it may determine. The Group Committee may also delegate to any office bearer of the Group such of its powers as it may consider appropriate.</li> </ul> |

- 12) Finance
- a) Such bank accounts as the Group Committee considers to be necessary shall be opened in the name of the Group. The Group Committee shall authorise in writing four of its members, of whom one shall be the Honorary Treasurer, to sign cheques on behalf of the Group. All cheques must be signed by two of those authorised signatories, of whom one shall be the Honorary Treasurer.
  - b) The Honorary Treasurer shall keep proper accounting records and shall prepare annual accounts therefrom, the closing date of such accounts being determined by the Group Committee.
  - c) The accounts for the previous financial year shall be submitted by the Group Committee to the Group's Annual General Meeting.
- 13) Annual General Meeting
- a) The Group Committee shall convene an Annual General Meeting in each calendar year. The Annual General Meeting will normally take place on the same date as the Group's annual Conference and shall run for the final 45 minutes of that Conference, unless management of the Groups business indicates otherwise.
  - b) Not more than fifteen months shall elapse between one Annual General Meeting and the next.
  - c) The business of each Annual General Meeting shall include a report by the Chair on the activities of the Group, consideration of the annual accounts of the Group and formal ratification of the office bearers of the Group following their election/re-election in terms of the process set out in clause 4 of this constitution.
  - d) No business shall be dealt with at any general meeting unless a quorum is present. The quorum for a general meeting shall be ten Full Members registered as such at any one time, present in person.
  - e) If such a quorum is not present within 30 minutes after the meeting start time or if, during a meeting, a quorum ceases to be present, the meeting shall be adjourned to such time and place as may be fixed by the Chair.
  - f) If the Chair (or in his or her absence the Honorary Secretary) is not present within 30 minutes after the meeting start time, the members of the Group Committee shall elect someone from among themselves to act as Chair of that meeting.
  - g) All questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast. Every Full Member shall have one vote, which (whether on a show of hands or on a secret ballot) must be given personally.
  - h) If there are equal numbers of votes cast for and against any resolution, the Chair shall be entitled to a casting vote.
  - i) If a secret ballot is demanded, it shall be taken at the meeting and shall be conducted in such a manner as the Chair may direct. The result of the ballot shall be declared at the same meeting.
  - j) The Group Committee shall ensure that Minutes are taken of the proceedings at all meetings. Minutes shall include the names of those present and shall be signed by the Chair of the meeting.

- 14) Extraordinary General Meeting      The Group Committee may convene an Extraordinary Special General Meeting at any time, if called for by the Chair or Honorary Secretary or if not less than ten Full Members submit a written request for such a meeting. The Honorary Secretary shall arrange for the meeting to take place as soon as possible after the request for any such meeting has been received and shall give 14 days' notice of the arrangements for such a meeting to all Full Members.
- 15) Dissolution
- a)      If the Committee determines that it is necessary or appropriate that the Group be dissolved, it shall convene a meeting of the Full Members for this purpose. Not less than 21 days' written notice of such a meeting (stating the terms of a proposed resolution for dissolution) shall be given.
  - b)      If a proposal by the Group Committee to dissolve the Group is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of those Full Members present and voting, the Committee shall proceed with the winding-up of the Group. Any assets remaining after satisfaction of the debts and liabilities of the Group shall be transferred by the Committee to some other charitable body or bodies having objects similar to those of the Group, to be decided by the Full Members of the Group at or prior to the date of its dissolution.
  - c)      Except as provided hereinafter, no part of the income or property of the Group shall (otherwise than in pursuance of the Group's objects) be paid or transferred, directly or indirectly, to the Groups members (of whichever category) on dissolution.
- 16) Alterations to the Constitution      This Constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by majority of the Group Committee present and voting at a General Meeting, providing that 21 days' written notice of such a meeting and of the resolution has been given.
- 17) Approval of the Constitution      This Constitution was approved and adopted by the Irish Raptor Study Group at a General Meeting held on the xxxx 2017. It supercedes the previous Constitution of the Irish Raptor Study Group.