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**Rotherfield & Mark Cross Bonfire Society**

**Annual General Meeting of Members 2025**

**Membership Conditions**

**MEMBERSHIP**

1.1 In accordance with the Society’s Articles of Association, all applications for membership must be approved by the Director(s) of the Company. Once approved, membership becomes valid on payment of the appropriate subscription fee.

1.2 Membership is for twelve months from 1 January to 31 December each year. The renewal date will be publicised in advance by email, letter or newsletter. Membership will cease if the annual subscription has not been paid by the date shown in the renewal notice.

1.3 Subscription rates, categories of membership and schedule for payment of annual subscription fees are approved each year by the Committee and ratified at the AGM of Members. Membership is for Adult Members (Members) who are 18 years or over, or Junior Members (Juniors) who are 17 years old or under. Junior Membership applications must be accompanied by a Junior consent form which nominates at least one Responsible Adult who is also a member.

1.4 Membership may be terminated, suspended or refused at any time at the discretion of the committee if rules are found to have been broken or actions of a member bring the Society into disrepute. The Directors and committee may reject applications which they consider are not in the best interests of the Society. Grounds for refusing an application include previous refusal by another Society or previous expulsion by RMCBS. In the event of application refusal, membership fees would be refunded. Upon membership termination, membership fees will not be refunded. Decisions by the Directors to refuse, suspend or revoke membership shall be reported to the elected Committee at the earliest opportunity.

1.5 Members are firmly encouraged to assist in the fundraising, preparation and running of RMCBS. Members may stand for or be co-opted onto the Committee. Contact the secretary to find out more.

1.6 Valid membership entitles a member to:

 - Wear RMCBS costume and represent RMCBS at RMCBS events.

 - Represent the Society at pre-agreed out-meetings and events hosted by other societies and organisations

 - Voting rights when attending General Meetings, including election of the Committee

 - Stand for election to the Committee and/or nominate others

**GENERAL CONDUCT**

In addition to payment of the relevant subscription, all members of the Society are expected to respect and follow the following general rules of conduct and behaviour:-

* 1. To comply with all RMCBS Society rules and follow instructions from the RMCBS committee, appointed marshalls, hosting societies and emergency services when representing RMCBS at any event. If no committee member is available to attend an event, a member delegated by the committee shall assume the authority and responsibility of a committee member to ensure our rules and values are upheld.
	2. To ensure they are aware of and comply with the Society’s Health & Safety Policy.
	3. To always act in the best interests of the Society and never say or do anything which may bring it into disrepute. Drunken behaviour, use of illegal substances, or reckless/criminal behaviour will result in expulsion from the event and subsequently from RMCBS.
	4. To always treat fellow members with respect and courtesy; bullying or aggressive behaviour either towards fellow members or members of the public will not be tolerated at any time
	5. To respect the Society’s ethos of equal opportunity and inclusion, and never to discriminate, harrass or display disrespectful behaviour towards any person or group(s) on the basis of age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religious belief or disability
	6. To comply with and respect all decisions of the Directors and elected Committee
	7. To comply with all requirements and guidelines set out in RMCBS GDPR and Data Protection Privacy Notice

The Directors reserve the right to suspend or revoke membership at any time should a member be found to have contravened the rules of the Society, acted inappropriately or aggressively or to have otherwise brought it into disrepute.

**PROCESSIONS**

* 1. Only members who have paid their annual membership fee are permitted to carry a lit torch within processions.
	2. When representing RMCBS, members may only parade if wearing the required costume.
	3. Members must process in orderly ranks of three across the whole road.
	4. Participants must respect any remembrance services or unique traditions of host Societies or RMCBS, particularly the removal of head-wear and silence as a sign of respect.
	5. Do not light torches until requested to do so by the appointed RMCBS member or host Society.
	6. Used torches must be discarded sensibly, away from large groups of people or parked cars. Participants must avoid making small bonfires by piling up torches. Dousing stations and/or collection barrels should be used wherever possible. Do not allow members of the public to obtain torches.

**DRESS**

* 1. Members must be dressed in costume authorised by the Society when representing RMCBS. Members may be expelled from the procession if they are not wearing approved costume. It is a matter of pride for the Society and the tradition of bonfire.
	2. All costumes should be made from non-flammable material and be adequately fire- proofed. This is of the utmost importance and is the responsibility of every RMCBS Member and Nominated Responsible Adult of a Junior.
	3. Sturdy footwear such as walking boots is encouraged.
	4. First pioneers are Witches and Wizards.
	5. The Smugglers costume consists of a RMCBS jumper, white trousers (NO other colour) and a red spotted scarf. It is optional to wear a black beanie, bowler or top hat, and/or a cotton satchel.
	6. Nominated Responsible Adults must be in costume or neither they nor their Junior Member can process.
	7. The Committee reserves the right to ban inappropriate dress and stop over-filling one type of costume.

WARNING: Bonfire and Firework activities can be dangerous. In joining the Society, members accept total responsibility for their own safety and the safety of those who may be in their care or guardianship.

4.8 All outer wear must be treated with fire retardant. Please note you will be carrying or close to burning torches. You may be close to firecrackers

4.9 The use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) is at the discretion of individuals, although it is the strong recommendation of the Society that it should be used by everybody. PPE may include, but is not necessarily confined to, ear protection, gloves, hair containment/hats and use of flame retardants on clothing.

**JUNIOR MEMBERS**

* 1. At least one Nominated Responsible Adult must accompany a Junior Member at all events.
	2. Nominated Responsible Adults assume all responsibility for the conduct of their Junior Members.
	3. In processions, Nominated Responsible Adults must be alongside or in the rank behind their junior member.
	4. Carrying a lit torch must do so under the STRICT CONTROL & SUPERVISION of their Nominated Responsible Adult. The Nominated Responsible Adult assumes ALL RESPONSIBILITY. Junior Members must be over 12 years old to carry a lit torch while representing RMCBS.
	5. Should a Junior Member turn 18 within their membership year, they will adhere to the adult rules. No Nominated Responsible Adult is required, and no increase in subscription will be required until membership renewal.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

6.1 Treat all General Data Protection Regulated personal membership information to which they have access with utmost confidentiality, using that information only in pursuance of approved legitimate business of the Society

6.2 Preserve confidentiality of discussions or decisions deemed sensitive by the committee

6.3 On leaving the committee, to ensure full and robust hand over of all RMCBS property, data and information to the Directors or new committee members; ensuring that no copies of any General Data Protection Regulated personal membership information to which they have had access is retained

***DISCLAIMER****:*

*Following these rules can help reduce (but not eliminate) the risk of injury at bonfire celebrations. They are made available to members to reduce that risk and must be agreed by Members upon taking out membership.*

*RMCBS stress that all participation is entirely at participant’s own risk and that it cannot*

*be held responsible for any injury, loss or damage sustained while celebrating Bonfire.*