

The Western Equestrian Society



CONSTITUTION
March 2026

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Western Equestrian Society (WES)

- 1 The Society shall be known as “The Western Equestrian Society” hereinafter referred to as, “the Society”.

Headquarters

- 2 The headquarters of the Society shall be at the address of the Treasurer of the Society, though meetings shall always be held at a place or an electronic method, convenient to the majority of the Council members by their mutual consent.

Objectives

- 3 The objectives of the Society shall be:
 - a) Promote throughout the British Isles high standards of Western Equitation as practiced in the United States of America and elsewhere across the world.
 - b) Stimulate growth of this riding discipline and to maintain and grow its acceptance within the British Isles.
 - c) Actively work with other western equitation organisations that promote timed, western riding-based disciplines to ensure they recognize their impact and contribution in maintaining the public’s social license (acceptance) of Western Equitation in the British Isles.
 - d) Define and enforce rules for the conduct of equestrian competitions and events approved by the Society.
 - e) Approve Judges to officiate at shows approved by or affiliated to the Society:
 - f) Encourage tuition in all aspects of Western Equitation by means of demonstrations, lectures and training clinics.
 - g) Encourage Members to train their horses to a high standard whether for pleasure or competition and for the latter to such a standard as to become eligible to compete at international level.
 - h) Organise and approve such other activities of all or any kind whether equestrian or social as may be deemed appropriate for the general benefit of the Society and its members.
 - i) Assess western professionals for inclusion on the Society’s list of approved WES Professionals.

Application of members funds

- 4 The income and assets of the Society shall be applied solely to its stated objectives.

Our values

5 Members are at the heart of our Society, we join the Society to support its objectives, the “what we do”, we also contribute to our culture, the “how we do things” and how we behave with each other and prospective members. How we achieve our objectives is as important as the objectives themselves. Here are 4 values which underpin all we do in the Society:

5.0 **Respect the Ride, Respect Each Other, Respect the Horse**

- We treat our horses, fellow riders, and the wider community with care and consideration. Welfare comes first: every horse deserves kindness, patience, and fair treatment. Members are expected to extend the same respect to one another, focusing on encouragement and empathy rather than criticism.

5.1 **Celebrate Every Step Forward**

- Progress is personal, and every milestone counts. Whether it's a first attempt or a polished performance, we recognise and celebrate effort, commitment, and growth. By valuing the journey as much as the achievement, we foster confidence and joy in our society.

5.2 **Share Knowledge, Build Confidence**

- We are a community that grows together. When offering advice or feedback, we do so with generosity and care, ensuring our words help others feel capable and supported. Knowledge shared with kindness builds trust, strength, and confidence across our membership.

5.3 **Many Voices, Common Objectives**

- Diversity makes us stronger. We welcome riders of all backgrounds, disciplines, abilities, and any breed of horse, knowing that inclusivity enriches our Society. By listening, learning, and respecting each other's perspectives, we create a united community where everyone feels they belong.

Membership

6 Membership shall be divided into six categories:

1. Life; 2. Full; 3. Family; 4. Youth; 5. Professional; 6. Honorary

- Membership shall be issued upon acceptance of application form and fees deemed acceptable by Council.

6.0 Membership shall be a privilege. NOT a right; application for which shall be made on the correct form and by fees and procedures prescribed by the Society. Membership or applications therefore may be terminated or rejected by Council of the Society for reasons that the said Council may feel are detrimental to the interest, policies, programmes, objects or even harmonious relationship of the Society and its members.

6.1 Whilst in good standing, all full members shall have equal right, interests and responsibilities with respect to the Society and its property. They shall be bound and obey all rules, regulations and by-laws of the Society and decisions and actions of the Council. They shall be entitled to vote by personal attendance at the A.G.M., and any extraordinary general meetings.

6.2 Annual membership shall be a fee determined by Council each year and shall run for 12 months from the 1st day of the month of joining. A renewal notice shall be sent to the current postal address or email address according to the current records held by the Society, prior to the expiry date of the membership. If renewal is not received by the last day of the month following expiry, membership shall be deemed to be lost.

6.3 Youth membership will be 50% of the full membership for those members under 19 years on the 1st January each year. On reaching the age of 18 years membership will be automatically extended to the expiry of their current membership year, from which date Full membership fees will apply.

6.4 a Little Britches (must be registered with the Society) for members 9 years or under on the 1st January of the relevant year f.o.c. On reaching the age of 10 membership will automatically extend to the expiry of the current membership year, from which date Youth membership fees will apply. Youth and Little Britches members will have no voting rights.

6.5 Family membership is restricted to two (2) adults (aged 19 and over) plus their children living at the same address. (Ages as defined in rule 5.4) Each of the two (2) adults will have Full membership rights. All must be registered with the Society.

6.6 Life membership is available at a fee of eight (8) times the annual Full membership fee. It is not transferable. All rights will be as Full Membership.

6.7 The Society, acting through its Council reserve the right to award Full Life membership persons who merit special recognition because of their efforts, in the promotion of the Society or Western Riding. All rights will be as Full membership.

6.8 Professional membership is for our approved WES Professionals, who provide education, instruction and coaching to our members and the wider western equitation industry.

6.9 From time to time, the Society, acting through its Council reserve the right to award Honorary membership (usually for overseas trainers, judges etc.) These Honorary members will have no voting rights.

- 6.10 Amateur status will be given only to those members who have not received cash remuneration for training either riders or horses within the last three years prior to their application for this status. Amateur status will be removed from any member by Council of member who receives cash remuneration for training riders or horses.
- 6.11 Any member who at the request of the Council, performs any work or services for or incurs expenses on behalf of the Society shall be entitled to such remuneration or reimbursement as the Council shall approve.

Management

- 7 All powers of management shall be vested in a council herein referred to as “the Council” elected from within the voting membership and comprised of a Chairperson, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Area Coordinator, Event Coordinator, Press and Public Relations Officer, Welfare, Health and Safety Officer and Youth Officer each entitled to one vote. The Council may in addition appoint any other person to council in a non-voting advisory capacity.
- 7.0 The Society Bank account, not including the area accounts, shall be held and administered by the Society Treasurer and one other member of Council (preferably the Chairperson or the Society Secretary).
- 7.1 Council members shall be elected by the membership attending either an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting. No more than three Council members residing in the same Area may serve on the council concurrently, but only two having a recorded vote.
- 7.2 Any position on Council which falls vacant may be temporarily filled by the Council from amongst the voting membership. The appointee shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting whereupon they shall stand down and may offer themselves for election by the membership.
- 7.3 At the Annual General Meeting in each year one third of the members of the Council shall retire, the members to retire being those who have served the longest in office, (Chairperson, Secretary, or Treasurer may not stand down in the same year). Retiring members may offer themselves for re-election.
- 7.4 Members standing for election to a position on the Council, except retiring members standing for re-election, shall submit to the Society Secretary no less than 7 days prior to meeting, brief details of their experience and reasons for their application for the position, to enable the information to be presented at the meeting
- 7.5 Council members are charged to meet at least three (3) times per year on a day and at a time and place or by electronic meeting, mutually convenient in order to discuss the proper running of the Society for the benefit of its members in all matters appertaining to the Society. Additional meetings shall be convened by the Secretary at the request of the Chairperson, or a quorum of the Council and no less than 10 days’ notice shall be given.
- 7.6 A minimum of four voting Council members present is required for a quorum; the Chairperson shall preside (or in their absence any other voting member of the Council so appointed by voting members present) and shall hold an additional casting vote.
- 7.7 Council members shall be indemnified by the Society against financial risk arising from the execution of their office and shall be entitled to be reimbursed for all expenses reasonably incurred thereby.
- 7.8 Any member of the Council may be removed from office by a Resolution carried by a majority vote at any meeting of the Council or at any General Meeting of the membership.
- 7.9 The Council shall have the power to make, amend or revoke, from time-to-time Rules and Bylaws for regulating the conduct and affairs of the Society, provided the same are consistent with the Constitution. A copy of such Rules shall be supplied, and changes

thereto shall be notified in writing (electronically where possible) to every Member whereupon they shall be binding on all Members notwithstanding that any Member shall not receive a copy.

- 7.10 When deemed necessary or expedient to assist with the running of the Society the Council may appoint any Committee or Working Party which shall conduct its business in accordance with the directions of the Council and report its proceedings to the Council, and all participants shall be entitled to be reimbursed for expenses reasonably incurred up to a previously agreed budget through their duties on behalf of the Society.
- 7.11 Where possible all business of the Society shall be conducted electronically.

Area Representatives

- 8 The whole of British Isles shall be divided in to geographic areas (Appendix A). These areas to be determined by Council from time to time as being appropriate to the distribution of membership. For each Area up to two (2) Representatives shall be elected by the Membership of that Area for a maximum period of two (2) years, after which they shall stand down, and may offer themselves for re-election. Any Area Representative may be removed from office at any time by Resolution of the Council or by a majority vote of all Area Members.
- 8.0 Each Area Representative shall be responsible in respect of their Area for:
- a) Promoting the Society and propagating its objects;
 - b) Organising and co-ordinating activities for Members;
 - c) Acting as liaison between the Area membership and the Council;
 - d) Enforcing the Health & Safety policy defined by the Society;
 - e) Ensuring compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the Society's insurance cover;
 - f) Accounting for Area funds and showing they are applied for the members benefit;
 - g) Ensuring that elections are held in accordance with paragraph 7;
 - h) Providing for appropriate disposal of Area funds in accordance with the directions of their Area Membership in the event of the dissolution of The Society.
- 8.1 Area Representatives are charged to meet at least once per year, on a day and a time and place (or electronically) mutually convenient in order to discuss the proper running of the Society for the benefit of its members in all matters appertaining to the Society. Resolution from these meetings shall be passed to the Area Cordinator for discussion by the Council.
- 8.2 Area Representatives shall have the backing and support of the Council and may, when deemed appropriate by Council, receive a contribution from Society funds (such sums to be determined by the Council) to assist in the expense of performing their duties, but shall indemnify the Society against debts or liabilities incurred in their Area, whether or not in the name of the Society.
- 8.3 Funds accumulated by each Area shall not form any part of the Society's central funds. They are for the sole use of each satellite area. However, if an Area's bank account is to be closed or is faced with significant difficulties, the Area's funds may be transferred to and held in the Society's central funds. These funds should be returned to the Area at the soonest possible convenience. At no time should Area funds be held in an account that could be considered a personal account.
- 8.4 Accounts opened by each area should have at least two (2) non-related signatories or approvals, who do not live at the same address. Area Representatives and/or their area treasurer shall produce annual draft accounts which must be circulated to all members in the area. All details of the Area accounts shall be lodged with the acting Area Representative, including any passwords.
- 8.5 Each area will hold at least one meeting annually to which all current members in the area should be invited, this can be either electronically or at a venue of choice. The draft accounts for the area up to December 31st should be approved by a majority and then submitted to the Society Treasurer or Area Coordinator at the earliest opportunity, not later than one (1) month prior to the National Annual General Meeting.

General Meetings

- 9 An Annual General Meeting of the Society shall be held within four months of the end of the financial year (or as near as unforeseen circumstances allow) to transact the following business.
- a) Receive reports from the Chairperson and other officers.
 - b) Receive and if approved, adopt a Statement of the Society's audited Accounts in respect of the preceding year.
 - c) Appoint an Accountant to independently assure the societies accounts for the current financial year in accordance with recognised accounting processes.
 - d) Elect Members to fill vacancies on Council.
 - e) Deal with any matter which the Council may desire to bring before the Members.
 - f) Discuss resolutions proposed by voting members by written notice to the Secretary, by no less than 30 days prior to the meeting.
 - g) Receive suggestions from members for consideration by the Council.
 - h) Discuss any other business relevant to the running of the Society.
 - i) Notice convening the meeting and specifying the agenda, together with a copy of the audited accounts shall be sent electronically to all voting members no less than 21 days prior to the meeting.
 - j) No business other than that printed in the agenda shall be the subject of a vote.
- 9.0 The financial year of the Society shall run from 1st January to 31st December each calendar year.
- 9.1 An Extraordinary General Meeting may be convened by The Council or shall be convened 30 days from the receipt of a requisition by the Society Secretary specifying the business to be discussed and signed by no less than 25 voting members. Only the business for which the meeting has been called shall be transacted thereat. No less than 21 days written notice of such a meeting shall be given to all voting Members, unless convened under the provisions of section 11.
- 9.2 At a General Meeting the Chairperson shall preside (or in his/her absence any other member of the Council so appointed by the members present) and shall hold an additional casting vote.

Variation

- 10 The Constitution of The Society shall be amended, supplemented, or rescinded only by ballot. Where a constitutional change is recommended by Council the ballot may be arranged prior to an Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting, with the ballot result being announced at the said meeting. Where Council have been requested to arrange an Extraordinary General Meeting and provided that notice and details of the proposed changes have been included with the agenda, the vote will be circulated after said meeting. Such resolutions shall be adapted by a majority of at least 10% of the total current voting membership. Ballot papers must be returned to the nominated recipients by the closing date of the ballot.

Liability

- 11 The Society and its Council and officers and Persons acting on their behalf shall not be liable for any accident, injury, illness or damage to horses, owners, riders, grooms, spectators or any person or property whatsoever or howsoever caused.

Dissolution

- 12 If at a meeting of the Council a resolution to dissolve the Society is adopted by at least three-quarters of the full voting Council, whether voting in person or voting by proxy, then the Council within 14 days convene an Extraordinary General Meeting by notice in writing or electronically of no less than 28 days. If the Resolution is adopted by a majority of at least 10% of the total current voting membership following a ballot of the total voting Membership then the Council shall appoint an approved Insolvency Practitioner to dispose of the Assets of the Society and discharge all liabilities and to distribute the proceeds thereof to or amongst any Registered Charity or Charities whose activities are as closely as possible consistent with the objects of the Society and which shall be approved by a simple majority of a ballot of voting members.

Appendix A

Geographic Membership Areas

- Area 1 Grampian & Highlands
- Area 2 Gwynedd, Clwyd, Cheshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire
- Area 3 Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Wiltshire
- Area 4 Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Northumberland and Tyne & Wear
- Area 5 Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and Yorkshire
- Area 6 Avon, Dyfed, Glamorgan, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Herefordshire, Powys and Worcestershire
- Area 7 Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire
- Area 8 Berkshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Sussex and Surrey
- Area 9 Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk
- Area 10 Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands.
- Area 11 Borders, Central, Fife, Lothian and Tayside
- Area 12 Dumfries & Galloway and Strathclyde
- Area 13 Dorset and Hampshire

Appendix B

Review and Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
2026.1	March 2026 AGM	Rob Painter, Chair on behalf of Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 3: Objectives. The proposed changes / updates seek to reflect changes in the world WES operates within and the WES professional change approved at the previous AGM • A New Section 4: Application of Members Funds. This is NOT new wording. These used to be part of the objectives, but I believe sit better as a separate section. • A New Section 5: The introduction of Pan-WES Values. In addition to the WHAT we do, I and Council, plus the extended leadership team, thought it was important to set out HOW, as a Society, we expect to work together. • Section 5: Membership. This includes the Professional category agreed at a previous AGM • Section 8: Area Representatives, specifically sections 8.3 and 8.5 regarding Area Accounts. • Section 9: General Meetings, specifically 9 c) regarding how the WES accounts are assured via independent third-party Accountant.