**Southwick and Fishersgate Horticultural Society**

**Constitution - March 2001**

**Affiliated to**

**The Royal Horticultural Society**

**The Royal National Rose Society**

**The British Gladiolus Society**

**National Chrysanthemum Society**

**National Dahlia Society**

**&**

**Southwick Community Association**

**Founded 1916**

1. **The Name of the Society**

The name of the society shall be “The Southwick and Fishersgate Horticultural Society”

1. **Objects of the Society**

The object of the Society shall be to promote good horticultural practices among its members by:

* holding regular meetings for lecture, discussions and demonstrations,
* holding horticultural shows and competitions,
* distributing horticultural literature among the members of the Society,
* arranging visits to gardens and other sites to observe gardening in practice.

The Society will consider affiliation to appropriate organisations.

1. **Membership**

Membership of the Society shall be open to anyone interested in gardening.

The Committee may, from time to time, confer honorary membership on individuals considered worthy of consideration by the Society.

1. **Officers of the Society**

The Officers of the Society shall be a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Membership Secretary and such officers as shall be deemed necessary and no one individual shall hold more than one office at a time. In the event that the Chairman and Vice Chairman are unable to attend a meeting, the Committee members present shall elect one of their number to take the chair for that meeting. The Committee may also appoint a distinguished individual to the honorary position of President for a term not exceeding three years, and may also appoint non-executive Vice-Presidents.

1. **Election of Officers**

The Officers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Society and shall hold office until the end of the next Annual General Meeting. The Officers shall be eligible for re-election unless their total term of office is limited by convention or regulation.

1. **Conduct of the Society’s affairs**

The affairs of the Society shall be conducted by a Committee consisting of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Membership Secretary and nine other members. This Committee shall have the power to co-opt up to three members to serve as full Committee members until the next Annual General Meeting and may appoint sub-committees or individuals, whether elected or non-elected, to perform specific tasks.

1. **Ordinary members of the Committee**

Committee members shall retire at the next Annual General Meeting. Members retiring shall be eligible for re-election.

1. **Ordinary meetings of the Society**

The ordinary meetings of the Society shall be held in accordance with a programme which shall be drawn up by the Committee and/or its sub-committee and issued to all members of the Society at regular intervals.

1. **Financial Year**

The Society’s financial year shall end on 31st December.

The Society’s Annual General Meeting shall be held within three calendar months following the end of the financial year.

1. **Annual General Meeting**

An Annual General Meeting of the Society shall be held in the month of March every year for the purpose of:

* approving the Committee’s Annual Report on the work of the Society during the preceding year,
* electing Officers and Committee Members for the following year,
* approving financial statements signed by an Auditor,
* electing an Auditor for the next year,
* considering any motion that has been notified to the Secretary of the Society at least 28 days prior to the date of the AGM and which has been circulated to all Members,
* noting any other matters for consideration by the Committee.

1. **Extraordinary General Meetings**

The Committee has the power to convene an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society at any time and must do so within 28 days of receiving a written request signed by ten members. Notice in writing must be sent to all Members not less than fourteen days before such a meeting informing them of the date, time, venue and purpose of the meeting. No business other than that detailed in the notice shall be transacted at an Extraordinary General Meeting.

1. **Chairman of Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting**

The President of the Society or, in his absence, the Chairman of the Society or in the absence of both of them, the Vice-Chairman shall preside at any Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society.

1. **Quorum**

No matters of policy shall be agreed at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting, nor at a Committee Meeting, unless a quorum is present. The quorum of a General Meeting shall consist of 25% of the membership and the quorum of a Committee meeting shall consist of eight members which shall include at least one Officer. The Chairman may not participate in the initial voting at any meeting but, in the event of a tie, shall have the casting vote. The quorum of any sub-committee shall be decided by the Committee when appointing it.

1. **Method of voting**

Voting at all meetings shall be by a show of hands unless the Chairman directs that a secret ballot be taken.

1. **Subscription**

The annual subscription shall be decided by the Committee and notified to all members at least 14 days in advance of the Annual General Meeting. Annual subscriptions are payable in advance and shall be due no later than the 14th February. New members joining after 1st November shall be deemed to have paid their subscription up to the end of the next financial year.

1. **Privileges of membership**

Membership privileges shall be decided by the Committee and shall be reviewed in advance of each Annual General Meeting.

1. **Non-payment of subscription**

No person shall be entitled to vote at any meeting of the Society unless their subscription for the year preceding that meeting has been paid in full. Any member whose subscription remains unpaid after the due date ceases to be a member of the Society from that date. The Committee may require any person wishing to re-join the Society, whose membership lapsed because of non-payment of subscription, to pay the previous year’s subscription as a condition of re-admission.

1. **The Society’s Funds**

All subscriptions and other monies shall be passed to the Treasurer who shall be responsible for all of the Society’s funds, for keeping accounting records thereof and presenting the accounts for audit at the end of the financial year. All sums received by the Treasurer on the Society’s behalf shall be paid in the Society’s bank account and all cheques drawn on that account shall be signed by any two nominated officers, one of whom shall be the Treasurer. The funds of the Society shall be used solely for furthering the objects of the Society and only in ways sanctioned by the Committee.

1. **Appointment of an Auditor**

An Auditor shall be elected at every Annual General Meeting to serve until the next Annual General Meeting and shall be eligible for re-election. No Committee member shall be eligible to act as Auditor.

1. **Death or Resignation of Committee Members**

If any Committee member should die or resign before the expiration of their term of office, the Committee may fill the vacancy as they see fit, but the person so appointed shall retire at the time when their predecessor would have retired.

1. **Alteration of the Constitution**

The Constitution may only be altered at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting and then only if notice of the proposed amendment has been notified to all members not less than fourteen days before the meeting.

1. **Winding-up of the Society**

A decision to wind-up the Society shall only be taken at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting which is attended by a minimum of half of the total membership. There must be a majority vote in favour of the proposal to wind-up the Society’s affairs by those attending the meeting. In the event that the decision to wind-up the Society is agreed, the meeting shall then go on to appoint a Committee of not less than three and not more than seven individuals to oversee the disposal of the Society’s assets. The meeting should give a clear indication to that Committee of the use to which any remaining funds should be put. The Committee appointed to oversee the disposal of the Society’s assets shall abide as closely as possible to the wishes expressed at the meeting which appointed it.

1. **Other Matters**

Any matters for which provision is not made in this constitution shall be dealt with by the Committee at its discretion and shall be reported to the next Annual General Meeting for endorsement or further direction.