



## CONSTITUTION OF THE PALAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

### 1. NAME AND HEADQUARTERS OF THE SOCIETY

- 1.1 The Society will be known as “**The Palaeontological Society of Southern Africa**” (PSSA), hereinafter referred to as *the Society*.
- 1.2 The official headquarters of the Society will be deemed to be located at the work address of the incumbent President during his term of office, unless otherwise determined by the Executive Council, whenever a new President takes office, the Society headquarters will move accordingly.

### 2. AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

The aims of the Society will be:

- 2.1 To foster interest in all fields of the palaeontology, to promote research into Southern African palaeontology, and to disseminate palaeontological knowledge.
- 2.2 To guide the activities of amateur palaeontologists and to co-ordinate them with the activities of professionals.
- 2.3 To determine and record the geographic location of palaeontological sites in Southern Africa which, on reasonable and sufficient grounds, are considered to be important, and where possible, either alone or in collaboration with other interested bodies, to take steps to preserve such sites for posterity.
- 2.4 To publish at a frequency to be determined by the Executive Committee an informal newsletter under the title “**PAL News/PAL Nuus**”, hereinafter referred to as the *Newsletter* which will be distributed to Members in good standing free of charge.
- 2.5 To encourage the publication by its Members of professional contributions to palaeontological knowledge in existing specialist journals, both locally and internationally.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 The Society has four categories of membership: Honorary, Ordinary, Student and Associate:
  - 3.1.1 **HONORARY MEMBERSHIP** – this constitutes the highest honour which the Society can bestow, and it is conferred for life. A candidate for Honorary Membership, who would normally be a prominent person who has made a distinguished contribution to palaeontology or a sister discipline, must be formally proposed by a Member in good standing and seconded by at least two other Members in good standing. The nomination, with a full motivation in support, must be submitted to the Hon. Secretary for consideration by the Executive Committee. If the



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Executive Committee supports the proposal, it will be put on the Members for approval either at a General Meeting of the Society or in a postal ballot. If no dissenting vote is cast against the nomination, and providing the affirmative vote represents at least two thirds of the paid-up membership of the Society, the candidate will be declared by the President duly elected to Honorary Membership. If the nomination fails to attract two-thirds support from the Members, even though it might not have drawn a single dissenting vote, it will fall away. Honorary Members are not eligible for election to any office in the Society, but otherwise they enjoy all the rights and privileges of Ordinary Membership, including the right to vote. They will not be required to pay membership subscription fees.

- 3.1.2 **ORDINARY MEMBERSHIP** – Any person interested in South African palaeontology may apply on the prescribed form for Ordinary Membership. Provided such application is supported by two members in good standing, and on payment of the prescribed membership fee, the applicant will be deemed to have been elected to membership. An Ordinary Member shall have all the rights and privileges of membership, and shall have the right to vote provided his membership is in good standing.
- 3.1.3 **STUDENT MEMBERSHIP** – This category of membership is open to bona fide full-time students who are not in employment. Application is made in the normal way on the prescribed form, to be submitted with suitable evidence of the applicant's status as a full-time student (such as a letter from the applicant's professor or supervisor, or from a Member to whom the student is known personally). Provided the Executive Committee accepts the evidence of student status, and provided the application is supported by two Members in good standing, and on payment of the appropriate membership fee, the applicant will be deemed to have been elected a Student Member. Student Members have all the rights and privileges of membership, including the right to vote providing their membership is in good standing.
- 3.1.4 **ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP** – This category of membership is intended for individuals or representative of organisation with whom the Society wishes to maintain close contact, without requiring that the persons concerned should apply for Ordinary Membership. By virtue of his office in the body that has legal responsibility for fossils in South Africa, the Director of the National Monuments Council of South Africa (and his Deputy) will be invited to accept this category of membership so as to maintain close links between the Society and the Council Associate Members will not have voting rights, nor will they



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be required to pay membership fees.

- 3.2 Membership in any category may be terminated by submitting a letter of resignation to the Hon. Secretary; alternatively, the membership of any person in a category required to pay subscription fees whose subscriptions are more than three years in arrears shall lapse (see Clause 4.3).
- 3.3 Any members who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee or of the majority of the members of the Society, acts contrary to the aims of the Society, or whose actions are considered likely to bring the Society into disrepute, may be expelled from the membership of the Society by formal decision of the Executive Committee.

#### 4. MEMBERSHIP FEES

- 4.1 The annual membership subscription fees for Ordinary and Student Members will be as determined from time to time by majority decision of the paid-up Members of the Society. Notice of at least one calendar month must be given to Members of any proposal to increase subscription fees, after which suitable arrangements must be made to canvass the opinion of the Members, with by calling a General Meeting or by arranging a postal ballot.
- 4.2 Membership fees become payable each year on April 1<sup>st</sup>, and a notice advising that fees are due will be published in the mid-year issue of the Newsletter.
- 4.3 Members still in arrears with their subscription fees by the end of July will be advised accordingly by the Hon. Treasurer. Members still in arrears by the end of December will have their membership suspended until all arrears have been paid; a suspended Member is not eligible to vote and may not be nominated for office. Members whose subscription fees remain unpaid for three consecutive years will automatically forfeit their membership.
- 4.4 No money will be refunded to any person who resigns or whose membership has been terminated by whatever means or for whatever reason.

#### 5. MANAGEMENT OF THE SOCIETY

- 5.1 THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Management of the Society will vest in a committee known as the Executive Committee.
  - 5.1.1 The Executive Committee will consist of:
    - the President of the Society,
    - the Immediate Past President,
    - the Vice President,
    - the Honorary Secretary,
    - the Honorary Treasurer,



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the Honorary Editor of the Newsletter,  
and such other Office Bearers as the Members may from time  
to time decide.

Apart from the President and Immediate Past President, all other Office Bearers are elected by Members in good standing present at the General Meeting of the Society held during each Biennial Conference, unless circumstances demand the convening of an Extraordinary General Meeting specifically for the purposes of holding elections.

5.1.2 These office bearers will hold office for approximately two years, determined by the dates of the Biennial Conference, i.e. their terms will run from the date on which they were elected during one Biennial Conference until the date of the next election at the succeeding Biennial Conference. The office bearers may include postgraduate students if they are situated in one place (i.e. for their degree) during their term of office.

5.1.3 The Executive Committee will have the power to appoint assistants for any of its Office Bearers or to combine the duties of any of the offices as it deems necessary.

## 5.2 PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION

5.2.1 At the end of his term of office, the incumbent President will automatically step down to become the Immediate Past President; the Vice President will automatically succeed to the presidency.

5.2.2 Should the President resign during his term of office, the Vice President will automatically assume the duties of the President for the remainder of that term; thereafter he will serve the following term as if he had succeeded the Vice presidency in the normal way.

5.2.3 Should the Vice President become President under the circumstances set forth in 5.2.2, an Acting Vice President will be appointed by the Executive Committee to serve during the remainder of that term; a new Vice President must then be elected by the Members of the Society at the next Biennial Conference.

5.2.4 Should the Vice President resign during his term of office, a new Vice President must be elected by the Members of the Society, if necessary via postal ballot; this person will then automatically become President at the end of that current term.

## 6. FINANCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE SOCIETY



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- 6.1 The financial year of the Society will commence on 1 April and end on 31 March of the following year.
  - 6.2 The Hon. Treasurer will operate and maintain a banking or savings account in the name of the Society. Withdrawals from such accounts must be authorised by the signatures of two formally appointed signatories (normally the Hon. Treasurer and one other member of the Executive Committee). If the Hon. Treasurer is not available any two other members of the Executive Committee who have been formally empowered to do so may sign a cheque or withdrawal slip on behalf of the Society, but as soon as is reasonable they must provide the Hon. Treasurer with full documentary reasons why it was necessary for the withdrawal to be made in the absence of the Hon. Treasurer.
  - 6.3 All income and expenditure on behalf of the Society is to be recorded by the Hon. Treasurer, or someone acting on his behalf, in the Society's account books, supported where appropriate by all relevant vouchers.
  - 6.4 Each year, as soon as possible after the closure of the financial year on March 31<sup>st</sup>, the Hon. Treasurer will submit the Society's books of account, bank statements and/or savings account statements and all supporting vouchers to a meeting of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will then appoint an independent auditor to audit the Society's accounts. Copies of the audited accounts and the auditor's report will be distributed to all Members for approval as soon as possible thereafter.
  - 6.5 The Executive Committee is empowered to decide how best to invest the funds of the Society, provided only that its decisions must be guided by what judges to be the best interests of the Society and its Members.
  - 6.6 The Executive Committee may determine any amounts to be paid by non-members as a subscription fee for the Newsletter or any other Society publication or service.
  - 6.7 The Organising Committee of each Biennial Conference must submit to the Executive Committee, for its approval, proposals for the registration fees and any other fees to be charged to delegates.
7. NEWSLETTER
- 7.1 The Newsletter will appear twice a year unless decided otherwise by majority decision of the members on the recommendation of the Hon. Editor or the Executive Committee.
  - 7.2 The Hon. Editor will have the sole right to determine editorial policy, provided this does not conflict with the broad aims of the Society, and to decide



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whether or not to accept any material offered for publication in the Newsletter.

- 7.3 The Society accepts no responsibility for the scientific or other views or opinions expressed by contributors to the Newsletter.
- 7.4 The Hon. Editor will ensure that one copy of each issue of the newsletter is submitted to each of the Legal Deposit libraries in South Africa, for as long as the Newsletter is published in South Africa or this remains a legal requirement.

## 8. BIENNIAL CONFERENCE AND GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

- 8.1 Unless otherwise determined by the Executive Committee in the light of prevailing economic or other relevant circumstances, a Palaeontological Conference will be organised under the auspices of the Society every second year, at a venue to be determined by the Executive Committee in consultation with the proposed host institution (if any). The occasion of such a Biennial Conference will also be used to convene a General Meeting of the Society at which Members may discuss the affairs of the Society, debate resolutions affecting the Society, its constitution and its activities, elect its office bearers consider and if agreed adopt the motion and discuss any other matters of interest to the Society.
- 8.2 The host institution or the Executive Committee (as appropriate) will appoint an Organising Committee to plan arrangements for the next Conference and General Meeting as soon as a venue has been decided. This Committee will be responsible, in consultation with the Executive Committee, for drawing up the programme of the Conference and for making such other arrangements as may be necessary for its conduct, including:

proposing the registration fees to be paid by full delegates, accompanying spouses, students, and any other category of conferee, and submitting these proposals in good time for approval by the Executive Committee;

calling for and receiving offers of papers, posters and other presentations for the conference, determining the acceptability of each, and compiling the Conference Programme;

Making adequate provision within the programme for the Society's General Meeting;

Negotiating appropriate accommodation at the most favourable rates for delegates;



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arranging a suitable social programme during the course of the  
conference;

organising suitable field visits to areas of palaeontological interest  
before, during or after the conference as may be appropriate.

making suitable arrangements for the compilation, editing and timely  
publication of the Conference proceedings.

- 8.4 The Executive Committee may in its discretion decide to invite prominent personalities in palaeontology or related disciplines to attend the Biennial Conference as its guests, provided it is satisfied that the costs attendant on such invitations can be met either from the Society funds or from outside sponsorship.

## 9. AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

- 9.1 Any proposal to amend the Constitution must be communicated to the Hon. Secretary in writing, with the signatures of the proposer and one seconder (both of whom must be members in good standing). The Secretary will notify all Members of the proposed amendment within one month of receiving it. A ballot on the proposal will be arranged not less than one month or more than three months after circulating or otherwise communicating the proposal to Members. For a constitutional amendment to be adopted a majority of two-thirds of the paid-up Members of the Society must vote in favour of it.

- 9.2 The result of such a ballot will be communicated to Members in the next available issue of the Newsletter, but any amendment so adopted will take effect immediately the outcome of the ballot is known.

## 10. DISSOLUTION OF THE SOCIETY

A PROPOSAL THAT THE Society should be dissolved may be made in the same manner as an amendment to the Constitution, except that the proposal must be supported by its proposer and two seconds who are Members in good standing. Should two-thirds of the paid-up Members vote in favour of the proposal, the Executive Committee shall dispose of all assets to best advantage, settle all outstanding accounts and debts of the Society, and wherever possible recover all amounts owing to the Society. Any remaining funds or assets will be divided equally among the paid-up Members, unless by a majority the Members decide otherwise.