



# Constitution of the Northern Group of Motoring Writers

## 1. TITLE

The title of the Group shall be “The Northern Group of Motoring Writers”, hereinafter referred to as “The Group.”

## 2. MEMBERSHIP

The Group shall consist of journalists based or published in the North who are recognised specialists in motoring. Any member with sectional interests shall declare them in the Group handbook.

## 3. MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

(i) Membership shall be limited to full-time working journalists or accredited motoring correspondents of media recognised by The Group and shall be available in the following categories:

**FULL MEMBERSHIP** – available to accredited motoring journalists with regular recognised and credible outlets who may be staff journalists or freelancers.

**HONORARY AND LIFE MEMBERSHIP** – awarded at the discretion of The Group and open to members who have provided The Group with long and dedicated service or who have retired completely from motoring journalism.

(ii) The Group would normally expect all working members to be invited to launch events specifically organised for The Group and all members (including Life and Honorary members) to be invited to social events organised for The Group.

## 4. AIMS

The aims of The Group shall be:-

- (i) To raise the standards of motoring journalism.
- (ii) To improve facilities for members to carry out their functions as journalists.
- (iii) To improve communication between The Group and the Motor Industry.

## 5. CONDUCT

All members shall do all they can to improve, and do nothing to detract from, the good reputation of The Group.

## 6. EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

(i) Executive Committee: The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, General Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary shall form an Executive Committee. It will be the purpose of this Executive to guide The Group and advise it on matters of policy. The immediate past Chairman shall be a member of the Executive Committee for a year on terminating office.

(ii) Membership Committee: Five members shall comprise the Membership Committee. It will be the purpose of this Committee to guide The Group on membership applications, having had the opportunity to verify the credentials of applicants and to have examined applicants' work. The Committee will also report to The Group on changes in members' professional circumstances and to make recommendations. The Committee will meet before each business meeting of The Group to discuss membership matters and will meet before the annual meeting each year to review membership renewals.

## 7. MEETINGS

(i) Meetings of The Group shall be called by the General Secretary and there should be a minimum of three meetings each year at such times and places as may be found convenient. No longer than four months should elapse between meetings even if a sponsor is not forthcoming. Ten members will form a quorum.

(ii) In the event of a quorum not being formed, any two Executive Officers present may, with the approval of other members present, agree to the suspension of standing orders to enable urgent business to be discussed and decisions taken.

(iii) Minutes shall be taken by the General Secretary, or any other member elected for that meeting. To encourage an informed and active membership the minutes shall be circulated to all members of The Group at least two weeks before the next meeting.

(iv) Any decision taken at a meeting of members can only be changed by a further meeting of members.

## 8. ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of The Group shall be held before the end of May each year to conduct the following business:

(i) Reports of the Executive Officers.

(ii) Election of a Chairman, who shall serve a maximum of two years, and Vice-Chairman, who shall normally be considered to be Chairman-elect.

(iii) Election of General Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Chairman and Membership Secretary, Meetings Secretary, Handbook Editor, Newsletter Editor, Website Officer, Auditor and Welfare Officer and appropriate sub-committees for the following 12 months.

(iv) Any other appropriate business accepted by the chair.

(v) Changes to the Constitution of the Group shall be considered at the Annual General Meeting and be implemented on a majority vote of all those present.

(vi) In order to discuss urgent constitutional matters, members may decide, by a majority vote of those present at a normal business meeting, to call an Extraordinary General Meeting of The Group. This will normally be held on the same date and at the same venue as the next available normal business meeting.

(vii) Any member proposing changes to the Constitution should submit their proposals to the General Secretary at least four weeks prior to the AGM or extraordinary meeting. To encourage informed debate proposals to change the constitution will be circulated to members at least 10 days before the date of the meeting at which they are to be discussed.

## **9. MEMBERSHIP PROVISIONS**

(i) Application for membership of The Group shall be made on the appropriate form, together with the membership fee, to the Membership Secretary and shall be considered at the first available meeting of the Membership Committee. Each application must be supported by a proposer and seconder from the existing membership and must be accompanied by examples of the applicant's work – with proof of authorship – covering a period of no less than six months up to the date of the application and by letter(s) of accreditation from the applicant's employer(s). Only those with journalistic background (i.e. Employed or previously employed as a reporter/writer, sub-editor/designer, broadcaster or in a similar capacity in the media generally) will be considered. The Membership Committee will review applications, advise the Group on the eligibility of membership of applicants and make recommendations. Applicants may satisfy Group requirements but it is important that new members uphold the standards of the Group while attending events, launches, meetings, dinners etc. Accordingly, they are subject to a 12 months' probationary period after which the membership committee can decide whether that person, as well as satisfying current annual requirements, has acted appropriately as an ambassador of the Group.

(ii) Members must renew their membership annually. In order to do so, members must send original or copies of 12 articles of at least 300 words, spread throughout the year to the Membership Secretary between January 1 and March 31. Members' cuttings should be representative of their stated main outlets in the handbook. Membership fees are to be fixed at the first Group meeting of the year and must be paid to the Treasurer by March 31. Failure to reapply for membership or to pay by the due date may result in the imposition of financial penalties or whatever action the Membership Committee deems appropriate.

(iii) Members are required to inform The Group of any changes in their professional circumstances. Those who cease to qualify for membership during a membership term are required to notify the Membership Secretary immediately. They shall normally forfeit their rights as members and be entitled to a proportionate return of their membership fee for that year.

(iv) Prospective or existing members undertaking motoring-related promotional activity, paid or unpaid, shall declare such activities to the Membership Committee who will report to a members' meeting whether or not such activities are considered acceptable under the Group's Constitution.

(v) The Group has the right to suspend and/or expel a member.

(vi) Members are expected to attend a minimum of four Group functions each year. Members who fail to meet this provision will be called upon to outline their reasons to the Membership Committee.

## **10. TEST CARS**

One week is recognised by members as the minimum testing period.

## **11. COMMUNICATION**

All members shall be encouraged to contribute to the Newsletter published every two months and to the Group's website and to recognise the importance of the Newsletter and the website as links between members who may be working many miles apart.

## **12. GENERAL POLICY**

It is the policy of The Group that members do not fly in aircraft or helicopters with only one pilot. Members are advised not to sign disclaimers relating to launches and test cars issued by manufacturers other than those deemed acceptable by the Group.