New Moon Morris

Constitution – Version 3
(ratified by AGM 17 October 2023)

1.0 Identity

1.1 The group is called New Moon Morris (hereafter referred to as NMM, or the 'side').

1.2 The side is based at: The Town Hall, High Street, Ivinghoe, LU7 9EP.

2.0 Purpose

2.1 The aim of NMM is to enjoy, promote and entertain via music and dance. The style of NMM is primarily based on, but is not limited to, traditional English Morris.

2.2 We aim for excellence in all areas of performance, but this is secondary to our enjoyment.

2.3 Our events include dancing and music at a variety of venues.

2.4 Dancers are encouraged (but not required) to learn an instrument so that they can play when not dancing.

2.5 Musicians are encouraged (but not required) to learn dances.

2.6 Members may develop new dances and tunes, for submission to the side for refinement and approval.

3.0 Activities

3.1 **Practice sessions.** These currently take place at Ivinghoe Town Hall, most Tuesday evenings from 20:15 pm to 22:15 pm. These may be swapped for other activities or cancelled altogether, as deemed appropriate by the side. Informal meetings relating to the side may take place during practices.

3.2 Public events

3.2.1 Dancing in public ('dancing out'). The Squire and the Foreman in consultation with the dancers will decide which dancers have reached a sufficient standard to dance any specific dance in public. When performing in public, the Squire, or whoever is acting as Squire for that event, is responsible for overall communications and organisation; the Foreman is responsible for checking in advance of any event that we have enough dancers able to dance any particular dance, and in consultation with the dancers, and the musicians (if appropriate), will decide which dances to dance at public events.

3.2.2 Playing music for NMM. The primary aim of the band is to perform the best music possible to support the dancers. The secondary aim is to provide the best possible public musical performances between dances (or at occasional music-only performances).

Musicians of all abilities, and all suitable instruments, are welcome to join the band. Dancers may join the band when not dancing, and are encouraged to join the band to play percussion when not dancing.

Less experienced musicians should take advice from the core of more experienced musicians (those who have substantial experience of playing for dancing, or playing in a band).

The more experienced musicians should work together to lead and guide the group to produce the best Morris dance music and public music performances possible, and also to nurture less experienced Morris musicians.

Everyone should be willing to take advice and work together. Any problems should be discussed by the core group of more experienced musicians, with the aim of kindly offering constructive criticism and guidance to others where needed.

If issues cannot be reconciled in this way, then they should be referred to the Committee using the normal complaints procedure. The Squire and Committee will make their decisions by taking musical advice from the core of experienced musicians.

3.3 **Other Activities.** All or part of the side may, from time to time, take part in any other activities (e.g. parties, barn dances) deemed appropriate by the side. By appearing in kit, members are identified as "New Moon Morris" and deemed to be representing the side; so, any monies generated shall go to the side or the side's charity.

3.4 **Charging for events.** NMM does not generally charge for performing at charity events. NMM may charge for private events, such as weddings, corporate events, country fairs, etc. The charge will reflect the type of event, and the type of organisation running the event. This will be reviewed at each AGM. All fees for such events will be donated to the side's annual charity.

4.0 Kit

4.1 This comprises:

- Patchwork waistcoat (all members),
- Black trousers, a black kilt, or a coloured full (bespoke) skirt (colour being the member's choice) with leggings or tights,
- A black shirt/t-shirt or other appropriate black top,
- Black boots (coloured laces optional),
- "Ribbon sticks" - painted wooden sticks, adorned with ribbons at both ends.

4.2 Waistcoats and skirts are made to measure to a colour scheme chosen by the individual member by members of the side in a 'workshop' which the new member will usually be expected to participate in. The material costs for waistcoats and skirts are paid for by the individual member. Once completed and paid for, these become the personal property of the individual member.

4.3 Members will be provided with "blanks" for their ribbon sticks, to paint and adorn in their chosen colour scheme.

4.4 Members are required to provide their own boots, trousers, kilts and/or shirts/t-shirts.

4.5 Individual members may augment their personal kit with hats, scarves, badges, jewellery, etc., in keeping with the general appearance and ethos of the side. Discreet face painting or glitter is acceptable for those that would like it.

5.0 Membership

5.1 Membership shall be available to all, without regard to age, gender, race, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and is at the discretion of the side.

5.2 Membership is open to all ages, but those under 18, or any vulnerable adults, must be accompanied by an appropriate adult at all times (see 5.2.1). Members below the age of 18 or over the age of 75 must be aware that they are not covered by our corporate Morris Federation insurance policy. If a member has any medical issues that may impinge on their health and safety, or the health and safety of others, then they must declare this.

5.2.1 an **appropriate adult** is a parent, guardian, social worker, or adult with enhanced DBS.

5.3 Morris dancing is a physical activity involving rapid movement and waving of sticks. NMM is an inclusive side and will make all reasonable adjustments to include members with disabilities, however, those with special needs must recognise that safety of all members is essential meaning that some of our activities may not be appropriate for them. Final decisions about safety rest with the Squire in consultation with the rest of the side.

5.4 Membership of the side is gained through payment of a non-refundable monthly membership fee, which is set at the AGM. In joining the side members are agreeing to abide by the Constitution of the side.

5.4.1 In joining the side all members agree to adhere to the side's "Standards of conduct" as outlined in section 9.0 of these rules.

5.5 Practice meetings are open to non-members for up to 4 weeks, after which time they must decide if they wish to join the side.

5.6 Members may resign at any time by informing the Squire, at which time they may terminate their monthly subscription.

5.7 Any member who absents themselves for six consecutive meetings, without any communication with any Officers, will be deemed to have resigned, and will be removed from all email distribution lists and social media accounts.

5.8 **Country membership** is available to members if they are likely to be unable to regularly attend normal practice sessions over a period of at least three months. The cost for 'Country membership' is set at half of the normal membership fee. This is most appropriate to members who may be able to attend some practice sessions and who wish to retain voting rights, and remain on all social media accounts, otherwise Associate membership may be more appropriate for them. Country membership is by agreement with the Squire.

5.8 **Associate membership** may be granted at the discretion of the committee, to present or past members who are no longer able to join in regular practices for whatever reason but wish to remain associated with NMM. There will be no fee, but they must be aware that their involvement in public performances if/when they are available, is at the discretion of the Squire and Foreman in consultation with the dancers or the musicians, as appropriate, for that event. Associate members will remain members of the FaceBook group, but will not receive emails, or be a member of the WhatsApp groups (or similar social media groups). Anyone wishing to withdraw from associate membership should do so by informing the Squire.

6.0 Side Officers.

6.1 Members may be accepted for Committee roles only after they have been members for at least six months.

6.2 Officers (Committee): The role of the Officers is to collectively make decisions on behalf of the side in all organisational and disciplinary matters.

6.2.1 Squire - The Squire is chair of all side meetings, represents the side in public, coordinates activities when dancing out, is considered the person in authority when the side is performing at an event, and mediates disputes within the side.

6.2.2 Treasurer - The Treasurer is responsible for collecting subscriptions, paying the hall hire and other fees and reimbursing members for agreed NMM expenditure (on proof of payment). The treasurer will also provide the squire with a monthly bank statement.

6.2.3 Foreman – The Foreman coordinates the dancers and ensures that we have a combination of dancers who are able to dance a suitable repertoire of dances in advance of upcoming events. The Foreman works with the side to agree the dances for public performance. The Foreman will work with the Squire and the members of the side to decide whether members are ready for public performance. The Foreman is expected to be a dancer who is able to dance in a wide variety of positions in dances, as well as to be able to call for dances.

6.2.4 Bagman - The Bagman is responsible for booking the side to perform in public at events, handling invitations, keeping a record of which dancers and musicians will able to attend which events, confirming or cancelling events if the side is able/unable to perform and keeping members regularly updated in all these matters. The Bagman may also organise events with assistance from other members of the side.

6.2.5 Publicity – The Publicity Officer is responsible for advertising and promoting the side through printed and digital media as well as developing and maintaining the NMM website and social media accounts.

6.2.6 Secretary – The Secretary is a non-voting member of the Committee and may be a member who has been co-opted by the Committee, or may be a member of the Committee, as agreed by the Committee.

6.3 As deemed appropriate, any Officer may delegate tasks to other members of the side with their agreement.

6.3 The committee will meet at least quarterly to discuss and make decisions relating to the side, its activities and any urgent or disciplinary matters.

At any time, a committee member, or at least a third of the members of the side, may request a committee meeting to deal with any more urgent matters, which should be held as soon as practical – normally within two weeks of the request. The Squire does not normally vote at these meetings, except in the case of a split decision, in which case he/she has a casting vote**.** A synopsis of these meetings will be circulated to all members within seven days of the meeting**.**

6.4 On a day-to-day basis decisions are made by the members of the side, with dancers working with musicians to decide which dances and music are performed. Any dancer may call, or teach a dance, with the agreement of the rest of the side. All musicians are encouraged to develop the skills to lead music for public performances. Musicians decide among themselves who is to lead the music at any public event. At their discretion different musicians may lead different tunes. In the event of any uncertainty this should be referred to the Squire, or whoever is acting as Squire at that event.

6.5 All officers are appointed at the AGM and will stand for a period of 2 years, after which they can stand for re-election. The posts will be staggered each year, such that 2 or 3 appointments are made at each AGM. The remaining appointments will not be up for election, in order to ensure a continuation of experience in the Officers of the side.

6.5.1 Members of the side may be elected to more than one appointment concurrently, if agreed as appropriate by the voting members, but they shall have only one vote at meetings.

6.6 Should an Officer subsequently need to vacate their position it is requested that they give as much notice as possible.

6.7 In the event that an officer is unable to perform their role, or if they resign with short notice, other members of the side will be co-opted to perform the role until the officer is able to act again, or an election is held for the post.

6.7.1 If the Squire is unable to perform their role, then the committee will make decisions on their behalf until an election is arranged.

6.8 Any officer who holds any access codes for any functions (e.g. bank account, web site, Facebook, etc) must pass on all access codes and passwords to an appointed deputy, who must store these codes securely; this ensures that these activities can continue in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Additionally there must be at least two administrators for all social media accounts in case a change or announcement needs to be made urgently, and the usual admin is unavailable.

6.9 Email Accounts – The Officers of the side should use the side email accounts when acting on behalf of the side. This is to ensure continuity with replacement Officers. The email accounts affected are: squire.newmoon@gmail.com, bagman.newmoon@gmail.com, and publicity.newmoon@gmail.com.

7.0 General Meetings

7.1 A formal meeting of all members will be held at least twice each year. The AGM and another meeting about six months later.

7.2 An Annual General Meeting shall be held in November of each year. The date, time and venue of the Annual General Meeting shall be announced by the Squire at least four weeks in advance, the agenda circulated by the Secretary at least 2 weeks in advance.

7.3 Nominations (proposed, seconded and with the consent of the nominee) for Officers and any proposed changes to the constitution (with proposer and seconder), must be submitted in writing to the Secretary, who must pass all information to the Squire, in time for circulation with the agenda.

7.4 The quorum for an Annual General Meeting shall be the Squire, 3 other Officers and half the remaining members.

7.5 All members except the Squire, shall have a vote in the AGM and may vote by proxy if unable to attend in person. In the event of a tie in any decision, the Squire has the casting vote.

7.6 An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called to discuss urgent business at the discretion of a majority of the Officers or by request of one-third of the members. Details will be circulated by the Secretary two weeks before the meeting, otherwise AGM rules are followed.

7.7 Outgoing Officers are expected to assist their replacements by passing on and relinquishing all relevant post details, documentation, and controls, on vacating the role. This will include co-ordinating the transfer of side email accounts to different electronic devices – which requires two-step verification.

8.0 NMM Finance

8.1 NMM is a non-profit organisation.

8.2 NMM funds will be administered by the side Treasurer.

8.3 The Treasurer will provide a verbal summary of the current account at each quarterly committee meeting and an internally audited balance sheet at the AGM.

8.4 A receipt must be obtained for all side expenditure over £10, checked by the Treasurer prior to member reimbursement.

8.5 Decisions involving expenditure in excess of £60 will be made by majority vote of side members at an informal meeting during practice. The Squire and the Treasurer may make decisions on day to day running and expenditure of up to £60.

8.6 A charity will be nominated and agreed by members at the start of each season; this charity shall benefit from any monies/donations collected during our performances. These monies shall be accumulated and held by the treasurer and paid to the nominated charity at the end of each season in advance of the upcoming AGM when the charity will change.

9.0 Conduct and disciplinary procedure

9.1 NMM aims to be a community where all members feel safe, especially as we are an inclusive group. It follows that:

All members are expected to:

- abide by the inclusive ethos of the side, rather than just to the letter of the constitution
- show common sense in all matters
- treat all members of the side and the public in a friendly and civil manner
- treat all members of the side and the public as equals
- recognise and be respectful of other peoples' feelings

9.2 It is expected that any minor differences between members are resolved between themselves by private discussion. However, in the event of more serious or persistent difficulties, a formal procedure will be implemented, as follows.

9.2.1 A member may submit a written complaint about another member to the Squire. This should not be made as a general complaint to the side by any method, oral or written.

9.2.2 The Squire will ask the subject of the complaint (complainee) to explain their side, and will ask others for evidence or corroboration, as appropriate.

9.2.3 The Squire will present this information to the Committee and discuss the complaint. If it is deemed to be justified by a majority of the Committee, the Squire will issue a written and dated warning to the complainee.

9.2.4 Any member who is the subject of a third written warning will be excluded permanently from the side, without any reimbursements.

9.2.5 A written warning will expire after 3 years.

9.3 In the event of a member being accused of a serious or criminal offence, e.g. violence or theft, they may be suspended immediately from the side awaiting the result of criminal procedures, and following a majority decision of the Officers. It is the right of all members to contact the police if they feel that they are the victim of a crime from another member.

9.4 In the event that an Officer other than the Squire of the side is involved in any dispute within or involving the side, the Squire will co-opt a member of the side to take the place of that Officer to ensure impartiality in the discussions. In the event of the Squire being the subject of a complaint, or making a complaint against another member, the side as a whole will co-opt another member to act in the Squire's place.

9.5. It is the duty of the Squire to ensure that the Officers who are making a decision are impartial, and it is the responsibility of the Squire to co-opt impartial members of the side to stand in for any of the Officers of the side who may be judged not to be impartial.

9.6 As a general principle, email or personal messages of any kind between members should be considered as private and should not be forwarded onto another person without their permission. Obvious exceptions to this include emails containing threats to person or anything that is illegal.

10 Intellectual property, Photographs and Videos

10.1 In presenting an intellectual contribution to the side (including but not limited to dances, tunes, songs and publicity materials, in whole or in part) members are deemed to be granting New

Moon Morris a non-exclusive, non-revocable, non-transferrable, royalty-free and perpetual licence to use and modify that intellectual property in accordance with the function and purpose of the side. The member will retain primary copyright over their contributions.
(In plainer terms - if you teach NMM a dance or music that you wrote, you're giving us permission to perform it!)

10.2 Morris dancing is a public activity. In being involved you understand that members of the public will take photographs or videos of you and may upload those to social media.

10.3 NMM will use photographs or videos of you as part of our publicity. We undertake not to use individual photographs or videos that you dislike, but in being a member of NMM you are granting use in perpetuity of photographs or videos that include you, and you may not revoke that permission.

11 Data Protection

11.1 The side has its own Data Protection Policy which follows current legislation. It is available to view on our web site.

11.2 Members must maintain their email contacts list within the side and add new members or remove former members as quickly as possible.

11.0 Assets

11.1 The Assets of NMM are deemed to belong to the members.

11.2 Should the side close, the side's funds will be used to pay off any debts, then any surplus will be donated to a charity or charities to be decided by the remaining members.

11.2.1 All non-monetary assets will be auctioned to members of the side - or failing interest from the side, via public auction. The funds to be used in the same way as monetary assets.

12.0 Alterations to the Constitution

12.1 Any changes to this Constitution must be agreed by at least two-thirds of those members present and voting at any General Meeting.

12.2 The Constitution must be amended with any changes and circulated to members in electronic form within two weeks of the changes being made.