



Founded 1974

Byelaws

Revised November 2025

ABWAK BYELAWS (created 1974, last revised March 2018)

1.0. Wage demands

The Association shall not be involved with wage demands of employed wild animal keepers.

2.0. Opinion of the Association

No member without prior consent of the Chair or Co-Chair of the Association, shall state any opinion as being that of the Association unless it is so published by the Executive Committee's consent.

3.0. Eligibility for Professional Membership Status

With the exception of members of Council and the Executive Committee the following conditions apply to all members:

- If a zoo keeper applies for Professional Membership (or renewal of such membership) and is unemployed at the time of such application, then that person will be entitled to join as an Associate Member but may be granted permission to renew as a Professional Member at the discretion of the Executive. (This also applies for other zoo professionals granted membership, e.g. Zoo educators, registrars, managers etc).
- If a former zoo keeper is employed in another trade or profession (outside of zoos) at the time of application or renewal of membership, then that person shall not be entitled to apply for Professional membership but may join as an Associate.
- A private wild animal keeper must be keeping wild animals at the time of application, or renewal of membership, in order to qualify for Professional Membership status which will be granted at the discretion of the Executive.

Council reserves the right to ask for references or to check on the background/ suitability of any applicant for membership of the Association.

All members must be 18 years or older.

Retired zoo professionals may be granted professional membership status at the discretion of Council (otherwise Associate membership applies).

4.0. Official Representatives of the Association

4.1. The only official representatives of the Association shall be those members of the Executive Committee and those members of Council authorised by the Executive. Any other member attending a meeting or function outwith the

Association shall only act as a representative of the Association by consent of the Executive.

4.2. No member may use the name or logo of ABWAK to support their own practice or actions unless prior consent has been given from the Executive of the Association.

4.3. The Association logo, brand and style should be used in all official communications in accordance with any conditions laid down by Council.

5.0. Expenses

The cost of refreshments at meetings of the Council shall be met by the Association not exceeding reasonable costs.

The members of the Council shall be offered membership gratis whilst in office to recompense for the personal expenses incurred in the pursuit of their office.

A payment towards reasonable travel expenses will be offered to Council and Executive members for attending up to two Council and/or Executive meetings each calendar year. It is at the discretion of the Executive if any expenses are offered to any Council member for attendance at the AGM.

6.0. President and Vice President(s) Subscriptions

The President and Advisory Vice President(s) shall be offered membership gratis for the duration of office. Honorary Vice Presidents are awarded Life Membership with the position. The President and VPs are not entitled to expenses unless by special resolution of Council.

7.0. Patrons

The Council has the power to invite Patron(s) of the Association at its discretion, such Patron(s) will not be required to pay any subscription fees. Expenses to attend a meeting may be offered at the discretion of the Executive.

8.0. Overseas Members & ICZ

8.1. Members residing overseas (outside UK, Channel Islands, IoM and Republic of Ireland) shall be required to pay a surcharge to cover postage and packing of the Association's journal and this shall be such a sum as the Council shall from time to time decide.

8.2. All ABWAK Members, including those overseas, are granted membership of the International Congress of Zookeepers. Also see byelaw 17.

9.0. Joint Membership

Where two members reside in the same household a joint subscription may be paid in lieu of individual subscriptions. A joint membership shall be entitled to one copy of the journal per issue. Applications and renewals for joint membership must state the status of membership of each member.

10.0. Partners of Council Members

The partner of any Council member or other member who has membership gratis shall be required to pay the full amount of membership subscription, subject to eligibility, if they also wish to be a member and will not be entitled to any additional benefits or expenses.

11.0. Life Members

Life members who choose to resign from membership of the Association shall not be entitled to a refund of subscriptions paid in full or part. Such members will be required to state in writing whether or not they wish to continue to receive copies of the journal as published, and within twenty-eight days of the same having been sent to them shall imply that the member does not wish to receive such publications if no further communication is received.

Life Members may be dismissed from membership of the Association under Section 8 of the Constitution and if so dismissed will not be entitled to any refund.

12.0. Audit of Accounts

The accounts of the Association should be prepared by the Treasurer and submitted for approval and adoption at the AGM. The account year runs from 1st January to 31st December. The accounts should be available for audit if so recommended by the Executive.

13.0. Symposium & Workshop Host

The host of any ABWAK organised event or activity, such as the Annual Symposium or Training Workshops, shall be entitled to levy reasonable charges for refreshments agreed in advance.

The host shall be entitled to waiver of Symposium/Workshop fees for an agreed number of participants from the host collection or agreed 'drop in' free attendance.

The host shall take responsibility for health and safety, and insurance of participants whilst on their premises.

14.0. Awards/Gifts/Grants to Members

14.1. Awards/gifts to members of the Association or other such persons as may have rendered services to the Association may take the form of a token or small gift or a period of membership gratis; exceptions stated in byelaw 5; as determined by the Executive.

14.2. Award of Grants. The Association shall provide grants or awards, as decided upon by Council and level of award agreed by the Executive after a defined process of selection, to members for the furtherance of the aims and objectives of the Association, including the training and development of individuals and/or the support of conservation initiatives. Those in receipt of such awards shall be required to report upon their 'project' and expenditure as defined by Council when the award is made. Only members are eligible for such grants/awards.

15.0. Voting at General Meetings

- Where matters requiring a vote arise at the AGM, only Professional Members of the Association shall have voting rights.

15.1. Voting for and objecting to co-opted Council members

- Votes in favour of or objections to a co-opted Council member are invited from the membership during a defined period outlined in e-news, Ratel or social media.
- Membership is notified of successful candidates at each AGM.
- Applications for Council from candidates must be received by the date stated by the Chair /Co-Chair or his/her deputy, in the published notice of such vacancies. (This notice may be made via the website).
- All applications must be submitted as instructed in the notice and must include the name and membership number of the candidate applying.
- All applicants must be Professional Members except where Council or the Membership through special resolution, have called for nomination of an Associate member to join Council and this has been so notified.
- Postal votes or objections will be accepted if received within the timeframe stated in the notice which shall be a minimum of one month and a maximum of three months. All postal votes or objections must follow the procedure notified (this may include electronic submission if such votes or objections can be verified).
- Objections to any candidate co opted onto Council must be made in writing to the Chair/Co-Chair within the period notified via e-news, Ratel or social media. The Executive reserve the right to disclose (anonymously) such an objection to the candidate.

16.0. Vacancies on the Executive Committee

The Chair/Co-Chair may nominate any Council member to fill any vacancy on the Executive Committee at any time, and a majority vote of Council is required to confirm any appointment to the Executive.

17.0. International Congress of Zookeepers

17.1 ABWAK is a founding partner of the International Congress of Zookeepers and the Association will provide direct support to ICZ as decided upon by the Executive from time to time.

17.2 All members of the Association are automatically members of ICZ for the duration of their membership and are thereby entitled to member rates for the ICZ symposium and other benefits of ICZ membership as provided by them.

17.3 Members of ICZ through other zoo keeper associations have no voting rights unless they become paying members of the Association.

17.4 Members of ICZ through other keeper associations are not entitled to benefits of ABWAK membership but by reciprocal agreement with the respective organisation, certain privileges may be extended on a case by case basis – such as member rates for attendance at ABWAK events.

18.0. Members Elected to Council

Council members are deemed to have been elected if they have been co-opted onto Council by the Executive, the appointment of whom the membership has been given reasonable opportunity to vote in favour of or object to and to which no objections by the membership have been upheld within the stipulated timeframe. Council members are elected for 3 years and may be re-elected after that.

18.1 Each Council Member is expected to attend Council meetings and the AGM and must provide apologies in advance and reason for non-attendance. Non-attendance at a minimum of two Council meetings per annum without good reason, as accepted by the Executive, will be deemed to be resignation from Council.

18.2 All members of Council are volunteers and no payment will be made to members of Council other than reasonable expenses as detailed in section 5.

18.3 Members of Council are elected by the membership (or co-opted by the Executive and then elected) as individuals not as representatives of their employing institution.

18.4 Any conflict of interest arising from the individual Council member's employment or involvement in other activities must be notified to the Chair/Co-Chair and where necessary the Executive will meet to decide if any steps should be taken to address that issue.

18.5 Institutional support for Council Members from their employers is welcomed. This may take the form of supporting expenses, time, resources, to fulfil the needs of their ABWAK role. In such cases, the supporting institution may, with permission of the Executive, highlight their support for ABWAK in their own publications.

However, where such institutional support is not provided the institution cannot benefit from their employee's association with the good name of ABWAK.

18.6 Council members are expected to commit personal time (or institutional time if so provided) to the furtherance of the Association's aims and objectives – and this is expected to be a minimum of 6 days a year. Some of the roles within Council (e.g. Chair/Co-Chair, Vice Chair, Editor, Membership Secretary and ICZ require more time committed to them).

18.7 Council members are expected to progress actions from previous meetings and communicate between Council meetings in furtherance of the aims and objectives of the Association.

18.8 Any Council member that is unable to fulfil the commitment required can seek support from other Council members and the Chair/Co-Chair, but if still unable to fulfil the function required should stand down from Council, or may be asked to do so.

18.9 Removal of Chair/Co-Chair - should a situation arise where the post holder was deemed to be failing to fulfil the requirements of their role and/or failing to promote the mission and vision of the Association, Council members may call a vote of no confidence requiring the post holder to stand down, which will be carried with a two thirds majority.

18.10 Any elected Council member that ceases to be employed in zoo/wild animal work during the term of their office may remain on Council for up to 12 months, or conclusion of their term if sooner, at the discretion of the Executive.

18.11 A retired member, no longer employed in zoos/wild animal work may serve on Council for their term of office (if elected) and at the discretion of the Executive.

18.12 Council members must be 18 years of age or older.

18.13 Any incumbent council member wishing to stand for re-election at the end of their term must make their intention known to the executive committee. The membership is given a minimum of one month's notice of the council member's intention in which to submit any objections which must be made in writing to the Chair/cochair.

19.0. Employees of ABWAK

19.1 Council all serve as volunteers and receive no payment for services to ABWAK

19.2 Council may appoint and pay for professional services to enable fulfilment of ABWAK objectives, e.g. web design, data processing/membership systems; and this shall be reported in the annual accounts presented at the AGM.

19.3 Council has the authority, subject to budget and approval via the AGM to employ someone to enable operation of the Association if it can be shown that such an appointment furthers the achievement of its aims and objectives and does not represent undue risk to the future of the Association.