

Estuary Rat Club

Rules

1. The club shall be called the Estuary Rat Club.
2. **The aims** of the club are to further the fancy rat both as a companion and exhibition animal and to provide a point of support and contact for members.
3. The club shall normally operate within the counties of Kent, Essex and Suffolk but membership shall be open to all who are in sympathy with the club and its aims.
4. **Membership.** There shall be three grades of membership, namely Adult, Junior/OAP and Family. Juniors to be aged 15 years or less on 1st September. Minimum age 6 years. Only persons residing at the same address may have family memberships. Juniors shall not be eligible to vote, or hold official positions or used as signatories for EGMs. Family memberships shall be restricted to one vote. Annual membership rates to be agreed by the AGM following consultation with the treasurer. All memberships shall be renewable annually from the date of joining.
5. Application for membership shall be made to the Membership Coordinator along with the appropriate fee. Payment of the first subscription shall be deemed to mean that the member consents to be bound by the rules. The membership coordinator does not have the right to refuse membership but can bring to the attention of the committee any applicant that they consider unsuitable for membership.
6. The Hon Secretary and the MC shall keep a list of all current members.
7. **Executive Committee.** The club shall be run by the executive committee (EC), which shall consist of Chairman, Hon Sec, Hon Treasurer, Membership Coordinator (MC), Events Coordinator, Publicity Officer and three committee members. The EC shall have the power to co-opt others as necessary, subject to verification at the next AGM. All official posts are subject to annual election at the AGM.

8. The EC shall hold as many committee meeting as necessary to carry out its duties. At least 14 days notice shall be given to all EC members before a meeting.
9. The EC shall have the right to decide any club matter or arbitrate in any dispute which it feels is not covered adequately in the rules. Any rule changes brought about by this process must be verified at the next AGM.
10. Minor club business, that is any business not seen as contentious or that involves suspension/expulsion or other disciplinary procedures may be dealt with by post or electronic means.
11. A summary of all meetings shall be published in the club newsletter. Minutes shall be taken at all meetings and a copy kept on file by the Hon Sec. This copy shall be open to scrutiny of any member at a mutually convenient time.
12. **General meetings.** The AGM shall be held annually at a venue within the club's borders. Eight members shall form a quorum.
13. At least two months before the date the Hon Sec shall inform the membership of the date and venue and invite any proposals. These must be with the Hon sec not less than twenty eight days before the meeting. Proposals shall not be taken on the day but amendments to existing proposals can be accepted if it is the wish of the meeting.
14. A member who is not present may have their views read out by the chairman, but there is no provision for proxy or postal voting.
15. All rules and amendments passed by the committee must be verified at the AGM. All committee posts shall be up for election at the AGM.
16. All proposals need to be passed by a majority with the chairman (who normally cannot vote) having the casting vote.
17. Junior members do not have voting rights and family memberships have one vote.
18. Extraordinary General meetings may be called by 25% of the paid up membership (not juniors), who shall sign a petition stating the reasons for such a meeting and shall pass it on to the chairman/Hon Sec not less than twenty eight days before the date of the proposed meeting. The date and place of such a meeting shall be decided by the EC.

19. **Dissolution Clause.** The Club may be dissolved at any time by a two thirds majority of those present and at least twenty eight days' notice has been given to the membership of such a resolution. Any assets left after any debts have been paid off shall be transferred to a society with similar aims.
20. **Accounts.** The Hon treasurer shall be responsible for the funds of the society and shall keep the accounts. They will present an audited statement at the AGM. The auditor shall be elected by the AGM and shall not be a committee member. All monies shall be sent to the treasurer within two weeks of receipt. All cheques to be made out to the Estuary Rat Club. All claims for expenses to be made within three months from when the costs were incurred. No claims will be considered unless a proper receipt is produced. All payments must be verified by the treasurer.
21. **Disciplinary procedure.** Any member or proposed member whose behaviour is considered harmful to the ERC, its members, seriously affects the welfare of animals at a club meeting, or where serious breach of the rules has occurred shall be called to give an account of their actions by the committee. This shall be restricted to occasions held under ERC auspices. The EC shall give the person concerned 14 days notice of the meeting or the person may submit a written reply. The accused shall have the right to bring another member to the meeting. Following the outcome of the meeting, whether or not the person attends, the EC may
 - a) expel the member or refuse membership in the case of a proposed member,
 - b) suspend the member for a set period of time, during which they shall take no part in club activities and shall not receive a magazine or access to any club user group;
 - c) warn the member as to their future behaviour;
 - d) withdraw the complaint if it is not upheld.

Within 14 days of the committee decision the member shall have right of appeal to an EGM, whose decision shall be final. It is not necessary to get signatures. The Hon Sec shall inform all members giving 28 days notice of the date and venue of the EGM and stating the object of the meeting, at which no other business may be discussed.

22. Any persons shown to be bringing malicious complaints to the committee shall be deemed to be in breach of the rules and shall be subject to rule 21.
23. Any persons holding club properties or monies, who does not return them within three months of a formal committee request shall be suspended from membership until they are returned. The club retains the right to refer the matter to the appropriate authorities.