THE SOUTH EASTERN CIRCUIT

SEC · BAR MESS CONSTITUTION · EAST ANGLIAN

Constitution of the East Anglian Bar Mess

As adopted by the Mess, 17th April 2026

1. Name

The organisation shall be known as the East Anglian Bar Mess ("the Bar Mess").

2. Relationship with the South Eastern Circuit

1. The Bar Mess forms part of the South Eastern Circuit of the Bar of England and Wales.

2. This Constitution shall be interpreted consistently with the South Eastern Circuit Constitution.

3. In the event of any inconsistency between this Constitution and the Constitution of the South Eastern Circuit, the Circuit Constitution shall prevail.

3. Objects

The objects of the Bar Mess are:

a. to promote collegiality and professional cooperation among members of the Circuit;

b. to support the professional life and wellbeing of members practising in courts associated with the Bar Mess;

c. to facilitate communication between members and the judiciary or court administration where appropriate;

d. to promote the work and objectives of the South Eastern Circuit;

e. to organise professional, educational and social activities for members.

4. Geographic Area

The Bar Mess is associated with the following geographic area:

The counties of Norfolk and Suffolk.

The geographic description reflects the historic courts and professional community associated with the Bar Mess but does not restrict membership.

5. Membership

1. Membership of the Bar Mess is open only to members of the South Eastern Circuit.

2. Membership of the Bar Mess is voluntary and opt-in.

3. The officers of the Bar Mess may determine an annual membership contribution.

4. Any member of the South Eastern Circuit may join the Bar Mess by means of payment of the membership contribution and notification to of the officers.

5. The Junior shall maintain a list of members of the Bar Mess.

6. Members of the Circuit may belong to more than one Bar Mess.

7. Any member who ceases to be a practising member of the Bar shall cease to be a member of the Mess.

8. Any member who is appointed a Judge or who accepts any appointment which precludes his/her practising at the Bar shall, upon such appointment, cease to be a member of the Mess.

9. Any member who shall have failed, after due demand, to pay a membership contribution by such date as the officers have appointed, shall, upon reasonable notice being given to the Member, thereupon cease to be a member of the Bar Mess. The Officers may reinstate such person upon such terms as they may think fit.

10. Whosoever ceases to be a member of the Bar Mess shall have no claim for the return of any money paid by him/her to the Mess Fund.

6. Officers

The Bar Mess shall have the following officers:

- Chair
- Junior
- Secretary
- Treasurer

The officers together constitute the leadership of the Bar Mess.

An officer shall be appointed by the existing officers in consultation with the Leader of the South Eastern Circuit.

The officers may agree that the office of treasurer shall be fulfilled by the Junior.

7. Terms of Office

1. Officers shall normally serve the following terms:

- Chair – two years
- Junior – two years
- Secretary – two years
- Treasurer – two years

2. The Bar Mess may vary these terms by resolution at a General Meeting.

8. Court Representatives

1. The Bar Mess may appoint Court Representatives for courts associated with its geographic area.

2. Court Representatives may assist with communication between members, the judiciary and court administration where appropriate.

3. Court Representatives may assist the officers in organising professional or social events linked to particular courts.

9. The Bar Mess is not required to maintain a committee and may operate solely through its officers.

10. The Mess Fund

1. The Chair and the Treasurer are the signatories to the Mess Fund.

2. The officers may agree in their discretion to appoint any other member of the Mess as a signatory to the Mess fund.

3. The Mess Fund shall be applied as follows:

a. To the payment of the usual running expenses of the Mess.

b. To the payment for such Dinners, Drinks Parties, or other social events as may from time to time be determined.

c. To such other purposes as may be determined by the Officers.

d. For the payment of such banking charges as may arise.

11. Meetings

1. The Bar Mess shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year.

2. The AGM shall:

- receive reports from officers;
- conduct elections where necessary;
- consider matters affecting the Bar Mess.

3. Meetings may be held in person, electronically, or by hybrid means.

4. Voting may take place electronically where appropriate.

5. Any meeting at which the Chair and the Junior are present is quorate.

12. Extraordinary Meetings

1. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called:

- by the Chair; or
- by a request from members of the Bar Mess.

2. Matters affecting the governance of the South Eastern Circuit more broadly may be referred to the Circuit Executive for consideration of a Circuit-wide meeting.

13. Harassment and Bullying

1. The South Eastern Circuit Harassment and Bullying Policy, as adopted and amended from time to time by the South Eastern Circuit, applies to all activities and events organised by this Bar Mess.

2. Members participating in Bar Mess events are expected to comply with that policy.

3. Any complaint concerning conduct occurring at or in connection with a Bar Mess activity shall be addressed in accordance with the Circuit policy.

4. Any determination under that policy is solely for the purposes of participation in Circuit or Bar Mess activities and does not constitute a regulatory finding.

14. Governance Safeguard

If at any time the Bar Mess does not have sufficient officers to operate effectively, the Leader or Executive Committee of the South Eastern Circuit may make temporary arrangements to ensure continuity of governance until officers are elected or appointed.

15. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by resolution of the Bar Mess at a General Meeting, provided any amendment is consistent with the Constitution of the South Eastern Circuit.

Adopted by the Officers
Stephen Rose KC (Chair)
Joanne Eley (Junior)
17th April 2026.