Constitution of the Committee on Publication Ethics

1 The name of the Association is the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

2 The aims and objects for which COPE has been established are:

2.1 To provide a forum for meetings of editors, publishers, and others associated with the publication of biomedical journals.
2.2 To encourage and promote ethical standards in medical publications.
2.3 To provide guidance on publication, research, and other allied subjects to editors, investigators, and authors associated with such publications.
2.4 To provide guidelines and a code of practice to publishers, editors, and others in matters relating to suspected breaches of research and publication ethics.
2.5 To provide advice on dealing with any misconduct raised in connection with clause 2.4 and the code of practice.
2.6 In furtherance of such aims, to hold or arrange meetings and seminars for members, and to do all such other things as may be considered appropriate.
2.7 To publish an annual report for members on the work of the Association during the preceding year.
2.8 To receive and deal with representations from members concerning matters set out in the preceding subclauses. And in particular, with regard to allegations of misconduct, and to issue guidance and advice as to possible sanctions in respect of such matters, such guidance and advice to be in accordance with the general policy of COPE.

3 Membership

3.1 Membership shall consist of the following:

3.1.1 Editors of peer reviewed biomedical and related journals based in the United Kingdom and Europe.
3.1.2 Persons working in, or associated with, the publication of biomedical journals.
3.1.3 Honorary members co-opted by the Council.
3.1.4 Publishers who shall have group membership and shall be entitled to delegate a number of members as determined by the Council.

3.2 Membership shall depend on payment of the subscription as appropriate at any given time.
3.3 The mode and conditions of election to membership shall be determined by, and in accordance with, these articles.

4 Subscription

4.1 Every member shall be liable to pay a subscription in accordance with the initial rates set forth in Schedule 1 and thereafter as determined at the Annual General Meeting.
4.2 It is the intention that corporate members' subscriptions shall be based on a scale of charges determined by the number and frequency of publication of journals they publish.
4.3 Any member falling into arrears of subscriptions for more than two months shall be excluded from the committee.

5 Officers

5.1 The officers of COPE shall be:

5.1.1 A chairman
5.1.2 A vice-chairman
5.1.3 A treasurer
5.1.4 A secretary

5.2 The officers, except for the secretary, shall be elected by postal ballot at the Annual General Meeting and shall be members of COPE, or delegated representatives from corporate members, or associated with the publication of biomedical journals.

5.2.1 Officers shall normally hold office for 3 years except in the case of the treasurer who shall hold office for 5 years. Officers may stand for re-election at the end of their period of office on at least one consecutive occasion.

6 Council

6.1 The Council shall comprise:

6.1.1 The Officers.
6.1.2 No more than 4 members nominated by the officers.
6.1.3 The secretary.

6.2 The Council shall meet at least once every two months and following such meetings there shall be a general meeting of COPE.

6.3 The Council shall be responsible for:

6.3.1 The election of members and in particular the number of delegated members for corporate members.
6.3.2 The general and financial management of COPE.
6.3.3 All matters in the general interests of COPE.
6.3.4 The appointment of independent auditors.
6.3.5 The appointment of a secretary.

6.4 The Council shall present a report and audited statement concerning the finances of COPE for the preceding year at every Annual General Meeting.

6.5 In furtherance of the preceding powers, the Council shall have the power to appoint a sanctions subcommittee to make initial consideration of any such matters, in particular with regard to the provisions of clause 2 hereof, and to report its findings to the Council and make recommendations, which may include a resolution for the withdrawal of membership rights.

7 Annual General Meeting

7.1 The Annual General Meeting shall be held each year on a date and at a time fixed by the Council and must:

7.1.1 Receive from the Council a report balance sheet and statement of accounts for the preceding financial year and an estimate of the receipts and expenditure for the current financial year.
7.1.2 Fill the vacancies in the Council in accordance with the results of any postal ballot, and appoint auditors for the ensuing year.
7.1.3 Decide on any resolution which may be submitted to the meeting in the manner provided below.
7.1.4 Fix the annual subscription rates.
7.1.5 Consider any other business as determined by the Council.

8 Notice of Business at Annual General Meeting

8.1 Any member who decides to move any resolution at the Annual General Meeting must give notice in writing to the secretary not later than 21 days before the date fixed for such meeting.

8.2 At least 21 days before the date of any Annual General Meeting the Council shall send to all members notice of any vacancies in the Council together with a postal ballot form for election to such vacancies and requiring return of such votes at least 7 days before the meeting.

9 Special General Meeting

The Council may call a special general meeting at any time for any special purpose and must do so immediately on a requisition in writing (stating the purposes for which the meeting is required) from any 10 members or one fifth of the total membership entitled to vote.

10 Notice of Meetings

At least 14 days' notice of any general meeting, specifying the business to be transacted and the day, place, and hour of the meeting must be sent to every member by letter to his/her address, as given in the COPE register.

11 Quorum

The Quorum for a meeting of COPE shall be at least 6 members.

12 Alteration of Constitution

The constitution may be revoked, added to, or altered by a majority comprising two thirds or more of the members present and voting at an Annual General Meeting of COPE, of which notice has duly been given under clause 10, specifying the intention to propose the revocation, addition, or alteration.