

Company number 07680124
THE COMPANIES ACT 2006
PRIVATE COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES
ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION
OF
SOUTH WEST OPTOMETRISTS LTD
Adopted by special resolution on 16 February 2024

Introduction

1. Interpretation

1.1 The following definitions and rules of interpretation apply in these Articles:

Act: the Companies Act 2006.

appointor: has the meaning given in article 1.

Articles: the company's articles of association for the time being in force.

Business Day: a day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday in England on which banks in London are open for business.

Conflict: has the meaning given in article 7.1.

eligible director: a director who would be entitled to vote on the matter at a meeting of directors (but excluding any director whose vote is not to be counted in respect of the particular matter).

Model Articles: the model articles for private companies limited by shares contained in Schedule 1 of the Companies (Model Articles) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/3229) as amended prior to the date of adoption of these Articles.

1.2 Save as otherwise specifically provided in these Articles, words and expressions which have particular meanings in the Model Articles shall have the same meanings in these Articles, subject to which and unless the context otherwise requires, words and expressions which have particular meanings in the Act shall have the same meanings in these Articles.

1.3 Headings in these Articles are used for convenience only and shall not affect the construction or interpretation of these Articles.

1.4 A reference in these Articles to an "article" is a reference to the relevant article of these Articles unless expressly provided otherwise.

1.5 Unless expressly provided otherwise, a reference to legislation or a legislative provision is a reference to it as amended, extended or re-enacted from time to time.

1.6 A reference to legislation or a legislative provision shall include all subordinate legislation made from time to time under that legislation or legislative provision.

1.7 Any words following the terms including, include, in particular, for example or any similar expression shall be construed as illustrative and shall not limit the sense of the words, description, definition, phrase or term preceding those terms.

- 1.8 Where the context permits, other and otherwise are illustrative and shall not limit the sense of the words preceding them.
- 1.9 The Model Articles shall apply to the company, except in so far as they are modified or excluded by, or are inconsistent with, these Articles.
- 1.10 Articles 8, 9(1) and (3), 11(2) and (3), 13, 14(1), (2), (3) and (4), 17(2), 18(e), 30(3), 44(2), 49, 52 and 53 of the Model Articles shall not apply to the company.
- 1.11 Article 7 of the Model Articles shall be amended by:
 - (a) the insertion of the words "for the time being" at the end of article 7(2)(a);
 - (b) the insertion in article 7(2) of the words "(for so long as he remains the sole director)" after the words "and the director may"; and
 - (c) the insertion of the words at the end of article 7(2) "A sole director shall be entitled to exercise all powers and discretions conferred on the directors by the Act or the articles and nothing in these articles is to be construed as requiring the Company to have more than one director".
- 1.12 Article 20 of the Model Articles shall be amended by the insertion of the words "(including alternate directors) and the secretary" before the words "properly incur".
- 1.13 In article 25(2)(c) of the Model Articles, the words "evidence, indemnity and the payment of a reasonable fee" shall be deleted and replaced with the words "evidence and indemnity".
- 1.14 Article 27(3) of the Model Articles shall be amended by the insertion of the words ", subject to article 10," after the word "But".
- 1.15 Article 29 of the Model Articles shall be amended by the insertion of the words ", or the name of any person(s) named as the transferee(s) in an instrument of transfer executed under article 28(2) of the Model Articles," after the words "the transmittee's name".
- 1.16 Articles 31(1)(a) to (c) (inclusive) of the Model Articles shall be amended by the deletion, in each case, of the words "either" and "or as the directors may otherwise decide". Article 31(d) of the Model Articles shall be amended by the deletion of the words "either" and "or by such other means as the directors decide".

Directors

2. Unanimous decisions
 - 2.1 A decision of the directors is taken in accordance with this article when all eligible directors indicate to each other by any means that they share a common view on a matter.
 - 2.2 Such a decision may take the form of a resolution in writing, where each eligible director has signed one or more copies of it, or to which each eligible director has otherwise indicated agreement in writing.
 - 2.3 A decision may not be taken in accordance with this article if the eligible directors would not have formed a quorum at such a meeting.
3. Calling a directors' meeting
 - 3.1 Any director may call a directors' meeting by giving not less than 10 Business Days' notice of the meeting (or such lesser notice as all the directors may agree) to the directors or by authorising the company secretary (if any) to give such notice.
 - 3.2 Notice of a directors' meeting shall be given to each director in writing.

4. Quorum for directors' meetings

- 4.1 Subject to article 4.2, the quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting of directors is any two eligible directors unless there is to be only one director in office for the time being, that director shall form a quorum.
- 4.2 For the purposes of any meeting (or part of a meeting) held pursuant to article 7 to authorise a director's conflict, if there is only one eligible director in office other than the conflicted director(s), the quorum for such meeting (or part of a meeting) shall be one eligible director.
- 4.3 If the total number of directors in office for the time being is less than the quorum required, the directors must not take any decision other than a decision:
- (a) to appoint further directors; or
 - (b) to call a general meeting so as to enable the shareholders to appoint further directors.

5. Casting vote

- 5.1 If the numbers of votes for and against a proposal at a meeting of directors are equal, the chair or other director chairing the meeting has a casting vote.
- 5.2 Article 5.1 shall not apply in respect of a particular meeting (or part of a meeting) if, in accordance with the Articles, the chair or other director is not an eligible director for the purposes of that meeting (or part of a meeting).

6. Transactions or other arrangements with the company

Subject to sections 177(5) and 177(6) and sections 182(5) and 182(6) of the Act and provided he or she has declared the nature and extent of his or her interest in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Acts, a director who is in any way, whether directly or indirectly, interested in an existing or proposed transaction or arrangement with the company:

- (a) may be a party to, or otherwise interested in, any transaction or arrangement with the company or in which the company is otherwise (directly or indirectly) interested;
- (b) shall be an eligible director for the purposes of any proposed decision of the directors (or committee of directors) in respect of such existing or proposed transaction or arrangement in which he or she is interested;
- (c) shall be entitled to vote at a meeting of directors (or of a committee of the directors) or participate in any unanimous decision, in respect of such existing or proposed transaction or arrangement in which he or she is interested;
- (d) may act by himself or herself, or his or her firm in a professional capacity for the company (otherwise than as auditor) and he or she, or his or her firm shall be entitled to remuneration for professional services as if he or she were not a director;
- (e) may be a director or other officer of, or employed by, or a party to a transaction or arrangement with, or otherwise interested in, any body corporate in which the company is otherwise (directly or indirectly) interested; and
- (f) shall not, save as he or she may otherwise agree, be accountable to the company for any benefit which he or she (or a person connected with him or her (as defined in section 252 of the Act)) derives from any such transaction or arrangement or from any such office or employment or from any interest in any such body corporate and

no such transaction or arrangement shall be liable to be avoided on the grounds of any such interest or benefit nor shall the receipt of any such remuneration or other benefit constitute a breach of his or her duty under section 176 of the Act.

7. Directors' conflicts of interest

7.1 The directors may, in accordance with the requirements set out in this article, authorise any matter or situation proposed to them by any director which would, if not authorised, involve a director (an Interested Director) breaching his or her duty under section 175 of the Act to avoid conflicts of interest (Conflict).

7.2 Any authorisation under this article 7 will be effective only if:

- (a) to the extent permitted by the Act, the matter in question shall have been proposed by any director for consideration in the same way that any other matter may be proposed to the directors under the provisions of these Articles or in such other manner as the directors may determine;
- (b) any requirement as to the quorum for consideration of the relevant matter is met without counting the Interested Director or any other interested director save where there is only one director in which case the quorum shall be deemed met; and
- (c) subject to sub-article 7.2(b) the matter was agreed to without the Interested Director voting or would have been agreed to if the Interested Director's and any other interested director's vote had not been counted.

7.3 Any authorisation of a Conflict under this article 7 may (whether at the time of giving the authorisation or subsequently):

- (a) extend to any actual or potential conflict of interest which may reasonably be expected to arise out of the matter or situation so authorised;
- (b) provide that the Interested Director be excluded from the receipt of documents and information and the participation in discussions (whether at meetings of the directors or otherwise) related to the Conflict;
- (c) provide that the Interested Director shall or shall not be an eligible director in respect of any future decision of the directors in relation to any resolution related to the Conflict;
- (d) impose upon the Interested Director such other terms for the purposes of dealing with the Conflict as the directors think fit;
- (e) provide that, where the Interested Director obtains, or has obtained (through his or her involvement in the Conflict and otherwise than through his or her position as a director of the company) information that is confidential to a third party, he or she will not be obliged to disclose that information to the company, or to use it in relation to the company's affairs where to do so would amount to a breach of that confidence; and
- (f) permit the Interested Director to absent himself or herself from the discussion of matters relating to the Conflict at any meeting of the directors and be excused from reviewing papers prepared by, or for, the directors to the extent they relate to such matters.

7.4 Where the directors authorise a Conflict, the Interested Director will be obliged to conduct himself or herself in accordance with any terms and conditions imposed by the directors in relation to the Conflict.

- 7.5 The directors may revoke or vary such authorisation at any time, but this will not affect anything done by the Interested Director, prior to such revocation or variation, in accordance with the terms of such authorisation.
- 7.6 A director is not required, by reason of being a director (or because of the fiduciary relationship established by reason of being a director), to account to the company for any remuneration, profit or other benefit which he or she derives from or in connection with a relationship involving a Conflict which has been authorised by the directors or by the company in general meeting (subject in each case to any terms, limits or conditions attaching to that authorisation) and no contract shall be liable to be avoided on such grounds.
8. Records of decisions to be kept
- Where decisions of the directors are taken by electronic means, such decisions shall be recorded by the directors in permanent form, so that they may be read with the naked eye.
9. Number of directors
- Unless otherwise determined by ordinary resolution, the number of directors (other than alternate directors) shall not be subject to a maximum but shall not be less than one.
10. Appointment of directors
- In any case where, as a result of death or bankruptcy, the company has no shareholders and no directors, the transmittee(s) of the last shareholder to have died or to have a bankruptcy order made against him (as the case may be) have the right, by notice in writing, to appoint a natural person (including a transmittee who is a natural person), who is willing to act and is permitted to do so, to be a director.
11. Secretary
- The directors may appoint any person who is willing to act as the secretary for such term, at such remuneration and upon such conditions as they may think fit and from time to time remove such person and, if the directors so decide, appoint a replacement, in each case by a decision of the directors.
12. Directors Proxies
- 12.1 A director may appoint another director as a proxy to vote in a meeting of the directors on the appointing director's behalf provided that no such appointment shall be valid unless it is made by a written notice which:
- a) specifies the name and address of the director appointing the proxy;
 - b) identifies the person appointed to be that director's proxy and the meeting of the directors in relation to which that person is appointed;
 - c) is signed by or on behalf of the director appointing the proxy, or is authenticated in such manner as the directors may determine; and
 - d) is delivered to the directors prior to or at the commencement of the meeting to which the appointment relates.
- 12.2 Proxy notices may specify how the proxy appointed under them is to vote (or is to abstain from voting) or may specify that the proxy has absolute discretion (acting in accordance with their duties as a director) as to how to vote (or to abstain from voting) on one or more resolutions,
- 12.3 Unless a proxy notice indicates otherwise, it must be treated as:

- a) allowing the person appointed under it as a proxy an absolute discretion (acting in accordance with their duties as a director) as to how to vote (or to abstain from voting) on each resolution put to the meeting; and
 - b) appointing that person as a proxy in relation to any adjournment of the meeting to which it relates as well as the meeting itself.
- 12.4 A proxy notice shall be of no effect for the whole or such part of the meeting (and any vote cast during such period shall be invalid) where the director making the appointment:
 - (a) is in attendance; or
 - (b) would not himself or herself be entitled to attend, speak or vote at the meeting or that part of the meeting by reason of any other provision under these Articles (including, without prejudice, the provisions of Article 6 and Article 7).
- 12.5 An appointment under a proxy notice may be revoked by delivering to the directors a notice in writing given by or on behalf of the person by whom or on whose behalf the proxy notice was given.
- 12.6 A notice revoking a proxy appointment only takes effect if it is delivered before the start of the meeting or adjourned meeting to which it relates.
 If a proxy notice is not executed by the person appointing the proxy, it must be accompanied by written evidence of the authority of the person who executed it to execute it on the appointor's behalf.

Shares

- 13. Further issues of shares: authority
- 13.1 The share capital of the Company is comprised of an Ordinary Share of £1.00.
- 13.2 Subject to the remaining provisions of this Article 13 and Article 14, the directors are generally and unconditionally authorised, for the purposes of section 550 or, where the Company has more than one class of shares, section 551(1) of the Act and generally, to exercise any power of the Company to:
 - (a) Offer or allot;
 - (b) Grant rights to subscribe for or to convert any security into;
 - (c) Otherwise deal in, or dispose of,
 Share of the class(es) described in Article 13.1 above to any person, at any time and subject to any terms and conditions as the directors think proper.
- 14. Further issues of shares: pre-emption rights
- 14.1 Unless otherwise determined by special resolution, if the Company proposes to allot any Shares (other than any Shares to be held under an employees' share scheme), those Shares shall not be allotted to any person unless the Company has first offered them to all existing shareholders on the date of the offer on the same terms, and at the same price, as those Shares are being offered to other persons on a pari passu and pro rata basis to the number of shares held by those holders (as nearly as possible without involving fractions). The offer:
 - (a) Shall be in writing, shall be open for acceptance for a period of 21 Business Days from the date of the offer and shall give details of the number and subscription price of the relevant Shares; and

- (b) Shall stipulate that any existing shareholder who wishes to subscribe for a number of Shares in excess of the proportion to which he is entitled shall, in his acceptance, state the number of excess Shares (Excess Shares) for which he wishes to subscribe.

Provided that this Article shall not apply in the event that the Company wishes to allot Shares for non-cash consideration in which case the written approval of at least 75% of the existing shareholders, or a special resolution of the Company, must be obtained.

- 14.2 Any Shares not accepted by shareholders pursuant to the offer made to them in accordance with Article 14.1 shall be used for satisfying any requests for Excess Shares made pursuant to Article 14.1. If there are insufficient Excess Shares to satisfy such requests, the Excess Shares shall be allotted to the applicants pro rata to the number of Shares held by the applicants immediately before the offer was made to the existing shareholders in accordance with Article 14.1 (as nearly as possible without involving fractions or increasing the number of Excess Shares allotted to any shareholder beyond that applied for by him). After that allotment, any Excess Shares remaining shall be offered to any other person as the directors may determine, at the same price and on the same terms as the offer to the existing shareholders.
- 14.3 Any Shares not allotted to shareholders in accordance with Article 14.1 and 14.2 and to section 551 of the Act, shall be at the disposal of the directors who may allot, grant options over or otherwise dispose of them to any persons at those times and generally on the terms and conditions they think proper.
- 15. Transfer of Shares
 - 15.1 Shares may be transferred by means of an instrument of transfer in any usual form or any other form approved by the directors, which is executed by or on behalf of the transferor.
 - 15.2 No fee may be charged for registering any instrument of transfer or other document relating to or affecting the title to any Share.
 - 15.3 The Company may retain any instrument of transfer which is registered.
 - 15.4 The transferor remains the holder of a Share until the transferee's name is entered in the register of members as holder of it.
 - 15.5 The directors may refuse to register the transfer of a share and, if they do so, the instrument of transfer must be returned to the transferee with the notice of refusal unless they suspect that the proposed transfer may be fraudulent.

Decision making by shareholders

- 16. Poll votes
 - 16.1 A poll may be demanded at any general meeting by any qualifying person (as defined in section 318 of the Act) present and entitled to vote at the meeting.

- 16.2 Article 44(3) of the Model Articles shall be amended by the insertion of the words "A demand so withdrawn shall not invalidate the result of a show of hands declared before the demand was made" as a new paragraph at the end of that article.
17. Proxies
- 17.1 Article 45(1)(d) of the Model Articles shall be deleted and replaced with the words "is delivered to the company in accordance with the Articles not less than 48 hours before the time appointed for holding the meeting or adjourned meeting at which the right to vote is to be exercised and in accordance with any instructions contained in the notice of the general meeting (or adjourned meeting) to which they relate".
- 17.2 Article 45(1) of the Model Articles shall be amended by the insertion of the words "and a proxy notice which is not delivered in such manner shall be invalid, unless the directors, in their discretion, accept the notice at any time before the meeting" as a new paragraph at the end of that article.

Administrative arrangements

18. Means of communication to be used
- 18.1 Subject to article 18.3, any notice, document or other information shall be deemed received by the intended recipient:
- (a) if delivered by hand at the time the notice, document or other information is left at the address;
 - (b) if sent by pre-paid first class post or other next working day delivery service, at 9.00 am on the second Business Day after posting;
 - (c) if sent by pre-paid airmail, at 9.00 am on the fifth Business Day after posting;
 - (d) if sent by email or fax, at the time of transmission; or
 - (e) if sent or supplied by means of a website, when the material is first made available on the website or (if later) when the recipient receives (or is deemed to have received) notice of the fact that the material is available on the website.
- 18.2 If deemed receipt under article 18.1 would occur outside business hours in the place of receipt, it shall be deferred until business hours resume. In this article 18.2, business hours means 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday on a day that is not a public holiday in the place of receipt and all references to time are to local time in the place of receipt.
- 18.3 To prove service, it is sufficient to prove that:
- (a) if delivered by hand, the notice was delivered to the correct address; or
 - (b) if sent by post or by airmail, the envelope containing the notice was properly addressed, paid for and posted;
 - (c) sent by fax, a transmission report was received confirming that the notice was successfully transmitted to the correct fax number; or
 - (d) if sent by e-mail, the notice was properly addressed and sent to the e-mail address of the recipient.
19. Indemnity
- 19.1 Subject to article 19.2, but without prejudice to any indemnity to which a relevant officer is otherwise entitled:

- (a) each relevant officer shall be indemnified out of the company's assets against all costs, charges, losses, expenses and liabilities incurred by him or her as a relevant officer:
 - (i) in the actual or purported execution and/or discharge of his duties, or in relation to them; and
 - (ii) in relation to the company's (or any associated company's) activities as trustee of an occupational pension scheme (as defined in section 235(6) of the Act),

including (in each case) any liability incurred by him or her in defending any civil or criminal proceedings, in which judgment is given in his or her favour or in which he or she is acquitted or the proceedings are otherwise disposed of without any finding or admission of any material breach of duty on his or her part or in connection with any application in which the court grants him or her, in his or her capacity as a relevant officer, relief from liability for negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust in relation to the company's (or any associated company's) affairs; and
 - (b) the company may provide any relevant officer with funds to meet expenditure incurred or to be incurred by him or her in connection with any proceedings or application referred to in article 19.1(a) and otherwise may take any action to enable any such relevant officer to avoid incurring such expenditure.
- 19.2 This article does not authorise any indemnity which would be prohibited or rendered void by any provision of the Companies Acts or by any other provision of law.
- 19.3 In this article:
- (a) companies are associated if one is a subsidiary of the other or both are subsidiaries of the same body corporate; and
 - (b) a "relevant officer" means any director or other officer or former director or other officer of the company or an associated company (including any company which is a trustee of an occupational pension scheme (as defined by section 235(6) of the Act) , but excluding in each case any person engaged by the company (or associated company) as auditor (whether or not he or she is also a director or other officer), to the extent he or she acts in his or her capacity as auditor).
20. Insurance
- 20.1 The directors may decide to purchase and maintain insurance, at the expense of the company, for the benefit of any relevant officer in respect of any relevant loss.
- 20.2 In this article:
- (a) a "relevant officer" means any director or other officer or former director or other officer of the company or an associated company (including any company which is a trustee of an occupational pension scheme (as defined by section 235(6) of the Act), but excluding in each case any person engaged by the company (or associated company) as auditor (whether or not he or she is also a director or other officer), to the extent he or she acts in his capacity as auditor);
 - (b) a "relevant loss" means any loss or liability which has been or may be incurred by a relevant officer in connection with that relevant officer's duties or powers in relation to the company, any associated company or any pension fund or employees' share scheme of the company or associated company; and

- (c) companies are associated if one is a subsidiary of the other or both are subsidiaries of the same body corporate.