

Austin Gears
Club Charter & By-Laws
Adopted – August 18, 2012

I. Mission Statement

Austin Gears is a social organization which promotes individuality and self-expression of its members and in the larger community through education, the display, exhibition, and celebration of fetish gear in a non-judgmental and encouraging environment.

II. History

Austin Gears was chartered in Austin, Texas on August 18, 2012, by the following charter members: Bobby Thurman, Philip Campman, Joe Sanchez, Kelly Stephens, and Sym Prole

III. Governance

1. Austin Gears is governed by the Council.
2. At the chartering of the club, the members of the Council shall be the charter members.
3. The Council shall consist of no fewer than four and no more than six members.
4. The Council is empowered to make all decisions regarding club business, including but not limited to finances, public relations, membership, communication, events, and any other matters related to the operations, relations, and public image of the club.
5. Motions of business matters must be agreed to by two-thirds supermajority Council vote.
6. The Council shall meet once a month. Times more or less frequent must be decided upon by two-thirds supermajority Council vote.
7. Changes to the Charter and By-Laws must be agreed to by a unanimous Council vote.
8. The Council shall record and make public minutes of all meetings of the Council. Minutes of meetings shall include a roll call vote of all matters voted upon.
9. New Council members may be appointed by a unanimous vote of the Council, provided the number of Council members does not exceed the maximum number stated in part 3. Only persons who are part of the General Membership of Austin Gears may be considered for appointment to the Council.

10. Members of the Council may be removed from the Council by unanimous vote of the other Council members. Reasons for removal from the Council must be disclosed completely and publicly to the General Membership with a full accounting of the actions of the Council member that led to the removal. Only one Council member may be removed from the Council in a 30-day period. Council members may not be removed from the Council if doing so would decrease the number of Council members below the minimum number stated in part 3.
11. A Council member who misses three consecutive Council meetings is asked to resign from the Council. Other Council members may remove the Council member using the process listed in III.10. The Council member cannot be removed nor be asked to resign if doing so would decrease the number of Council members below the minimum stated in III.3.

IV. General Membership

1. Austin Gears shall hold a monthly social Gear Night at a time and place as determined by the Council.
2. The following levels of Membership will be recognized:
 - a. General Member - a Member who meets the requirements of retaining active status with the club as defined below.
 - b. Inactive Member - a General Member who has met the requirements to be a member in the past but is no longer meeting requirements.
 - c. Associate Member - a General Member who continues to meet requirements however does not live within the specified radius as defined below
 - d. Angel Member - any General Member who has deceased in good standing with the club.
3. Persons wishing to become a member of Austin Gears must attend at least three GEARS sponsored Night social events before being considered for membership. Attendance requirements may be waived by a supermajority of the Council. Persons wishing to become a part of the club must fill out a membership application provided by the Council. Persons must be known and vouched for by at least one Council member.
4. After attending the required number of social events, the Council may grant General Membership with a two-thirds supermajority Council vote.
5. General Membership is limited to queer identified individuals 21 years or older.
6. Any person granted General Membership must agree to recognize and abide by the Charter and By-Laws of Austin Gears.

7. General Members have the right to purchase patches and pins with the club insignia. The Council shall determine the procedures and costs for such patches and pins. Costs to General Members shall not exceed the actual cost of ordering the items from the manufacturer. The Council retains ownership of the club insignia, and any items with the club insignia must be surrendered to the Council upon request. The Council is not obligated to make restitution for any surrendered items.
8. General Members have the right to be present at Council meetings.
9. General Members may present motions for consideration by the Council. If another General Member also offers the motion for consideration (seconds the motion), the Council cannot deny consideration of the motion. The Council must discuss and debate the motion. The Council may approve, deny, or table the motion. If the motion is tabled, the Council must approve or deny the motion within 30 days of its presentation.
10. General Members do not have the right to vote on club business. General Members do not have the right to appeal Council decisions.
11. The Council reserves the right to revoke General Membership from any person by a two-thirds supermajority Council vote. Upon revocation of General Membership, such persons must relinquish to the Council possession of all patches, pins, or other items with the club insignia. Reasons for revocation of General Membership must be disclosed completely and publicly to the General Membership with a full accounting of the actions of the General Member that led to the revocation of membership.
12. Members of the Council are also considered part of the General Membership and enjoy all rights and privileges described herein, except where superseded in Section III. Members of the Council also must agree to abide by all rules described in the Charter and By-Laws.
13. Dues shall be set by a two-thirds supermajority Council vote. Dues shall be set for the following calendar year. Dues can only be set once per calendar year. Dues shall be used to cover the cost of incidentals such as web site registration and entry fees for club activities such as parades. Dues shall be assessed to all General Membership once per calendar. Dues may be waived by a supermajority of the Council due to hardship.
14. To retain General Member status, Members must live within a 250-mile radius as defined from the club's home bar. In addition, the Member must attend one club event per quarter per calendar. Eligible events include Gear Night, a club social, club fundraiser, or other club sanctioned education events. General Members must not be more than three months in arrears from assessment date on Club dues.

V. By-Laws

1. The Council shall keep all membership lists private. Neither the Council nor the General Membership shall disclose details of the membership list for any reason, except with written permission of the member.
2. All Austin Gears events are to be considered private in nature. Neither the Council nor the General Membership shall publish or make available for publication pictures, photographs, or video of persons participating in events, except with the written permission of the subjects of such media.
3. No person is required to wear fetish gear to Gear Night or other Austin Gears events.
4. Members of the Council, General Membership, or persons wishing to join the General Membership shall not humiliate, belittle, bully, or otherwise express any form of unwanted harassment toward persons wearing fetish gear. Such behavior by members of the Council or General Membership is grounds for revocation of Austin Gears membership.
5. The exhibition of patches and pins by members of Austin Gears makes those members public representatives of Austin Gears. As such, people wearing the insignia of Austin Gears, no matter their physical location, shall represent themselves with the highest degree of dignity and respect possible.
6. No person may use the name and insignia of Austin Gears, hold an event in the name of Austin Gears, or otherwise publicly promote the image or events of Austin Gears without the written permission of the Council.

Changes:

1.0: August 28, 2012: Changed language in Section IV Paragraph 3 for sexual orientation and age.

1.1 April 21, 2013: Changed to add language in Section IV Paragraph 4 for requirement that person joining must be known and vouched for by at least one Council member.

1.2: January 15, 2015: Added language to Section IV defining Membership levels and General Membership requirements.

1.3: February 25, 2017: Added language to Section IV Paragraph 14 for requirement that person joining must live within 250-mile radius of home bar.

1.4: February 2, 2020: Added language in III.11 if Council member misses three executive Council meetings. Amended IV.13 to allow Council members to set dues for following calendar year.

1.5: August 1, 2021: Changed language in IV.5 regarding General membership requirements. This change is to remove gay/bisexual/queer male or male identifying and is hereby changed to queer identified individuals.

1.6: April 5, 2023:

- Changed language in IV.3 regarding General membership requirements. The change is to speed up the process for potential members to join.
- Changed language in IV.9 regarding General member's rights. The change is to correct punctuation, typos, spacing, and grammar.