

THE CONSTITUTION OF: THE HIGHAMS PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GROUP

(hereafter 'the Constitution')

1. NAME OF THE PLANNING GROUP

The "*Highams Park Neighbourhood Planning Group*" (hereafter the 'HP Planning Group'). The HP Planning Group shall be the neighbourhood forum for the Highams Park neighbourhood. For the avoidance of confusion the name Highams Park Forum was not adopted as there is already an existing community group of that name.

2. AREA COVERED BY THE HP PLANNING GROUP

The neighbourhood covered by the HP Planning Group is as defined in the document "Highams Park Planning Group Area" (hereafter the 'HP Area') as appended with this constitution.

3. PURPOSE OF THE HP PLANNING GROUP

The purpose of the HP Planning Group is to:

- a. Review the options available to the community within the HP Area under the existing provisions of the Localism Act and to draw up and maintain a plan best suited for the needs of the HP Area (hereafter the 'HP Plan').
- b. Investigate, identify and monitor support for the HP Plan.
- c. Promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the HP Area.
- d. Take responsibility for planning, budgeting and monitoring expenditure on the HP Plan and report back to the appropriate officers of Waltham Forest London Borough Council (hereafter 'the Council') on these matters.
- e. Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to make the HP Plan as effective as possible.
- f. Identify ways of involving the whole community and gather the views and opinions of as many groups and organisations in the community as possible.
- g. Determine the types of survey and information gathering to be used.
- h. Be responsible for the analysis of the survey, the production and distribution of the final HP Plan.
- i. Identify priorities and timescale for local action in the HP Plan including lead organisations and potential sources of project funding.
- j. Report back to the appropriate Council officers on progress, issues arising and outcomes from the exercise.
- k. Amend and update the HP Plan as and when necessary.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE HP PLANNING GROUP

There are four classes of membership:

- a. Resident membership is open to all individuals who live in the HP Area.

- b. Enterprise membership is open to all individuals and formally constituted organisations who work in the HP Area.
- c. Councillor membership is open to elected members of the Council for Wards overlapping the HP Area.
- d. Associate membership is open to all.

Membership shall be effected by the act of a prospective member notifying the Secretary (see paragraph 5.b. below) that they would like to become a member and registering their details with the Secretary.

The list of members shall be made available to other members of the HP Planning Group in support of the work of the HP Planning Group, within the terms and conditions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation from time to time in force.

As a condition of membership each member agrees to abide by the terms of the Constitution.

5. MANAGEMENT OF THE HP PLANNING GROUP

- a. A Coordinating Committee (hereafter 'the Committee') shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting.
- b. The Committee will consist of a minimum of four and a maximum of fifteen members including the Chair, Deputy Chair, the Secretary and the Treasurer (hereafter 'the Officers'). All other Committee members should have a specific role, to be agreed by the Committee.
- c. Resident, Enterprise and Councillor members may stand for election to the Committee but Councillor members may not be Officers.
- d. Associate members may not stand for election to the Committee.
- e. The Committee shall have the power to:
 - i. Obtain, collect and receive money or funds by way of contributions, donations, grants and any other lawful method towards the aims of the HP Planning Group.
 - ii. Associate with local authorities, public bodies, voluntary organisations, enterprises and the residents of the HP Area and its environs without distinction of age, sex, race, disability, political, religious or other opinion, in a common effort to carry out the aims of the HP Planning Group.
 - iii. Terminate the membership of members who do not abide by the terms of the Constitution provided that the member shall have the right to be heard by the Committee before the decision is made.
 - iv. Do all such lawful things as will further the aims of the HP Planning Group.
- f. The Committee may co-opt additional voting members at its discretion, so long as the total number of co-opted members does not exceed the number of elected members.
- g. Co-opted members shall stand down prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- h. The Committee shall meet every two months as a minimum, or as may be required. At least five clear days' notice of meetings shall be given to members by written notices left at, or sent by post or email to the member's last known address. All notices of Committee meetings must detail the matters to be discussed.

- i. All Committee meetings must have at least four elected Committee members present, including at least one of the Officers.
- j. Every matter shall be determined by a majority of votes of the Committee members present and voting. In the case of equality of votes the chair of the meeting shall have a second “casting” vote.
- k. The Secretary shall keep a record of meetings and circulate minutes to members of the Committee not more than 14 days after each meeting.
- l. The Committee may invite any individual or organisation to take part in its meetings without voting.
- m. The Committee may set scales of fees for HP Planning Group membership.
- n. The Committee shall publicise contact details by which individuals, enterprises and organisations can become HP Planning Group members.
- o. The Committee shall maintain contact details of HP Planning Group members.
- p. The Committee shall maintain up-to-date accounts and publish annually reports, accounts and budgets.
- q. A person shall cease to be a member of the Committee having notified the Chair or Secretary in writing of his or her wish to resign.

6. GENERAL MEETINGS

- a. An Annual General Meeting will be held no later than thirty days after the 17th January each year hereafter and will be open to all HP Planning Group members.
- b. Notices of the Annual General Meeting shall be given by email (unless a member has agreed an alternative method of notification with the Secretary) at least thirty days’ beforehand during which time HP Planning Group members eligible to vote may propose motions for discussion or candidates for election to the Committee.
- c. Resident, Enterprise and Councillor members are entitled to one vote each. Associate members may attend and speak at the meetings but are not entitled to vote.
- d. Residents’ Associations and other community groups within the HP Area may also nominate representatives for election to the Committee provided that the nominee is a Resident or Enterprise member of the HP Planning Group .
- e. A Special General Meeting can be called by a majority of the Committee or by a petition signed by twenty-five or more members eligible to vote. The Secretary will then arrange a Special General Meeting within thirty days and notify all members by email.
- f. For a quorum to be established at Annual General Meetings or Special General Meetings at least fifteen voting members must be present .
- g. Decisions shall be made by simple majority of the individuals voting. A second “casting” vote shall be held by the Chair if the Chair is participating in voting, the Deputy Chair if the Deputy Chair is participating without the participation of the Chair, the Secretary if the Secretary is participating without the participation of the Chair and the Deputy Chair, the Treasurer if the Treasurer is participating without the participation of the Chair, the Deputy Chair and the Secretary. All electronic polls shall permit votes to be cast for at least three days.

- h. Individuals contributing to HP Planning Group deliberations shall declare any conflicts of interest prior to speaking.
- i. Constitutional changes may only be made at an Annual or Special General Meeting and must be approved by a two-thirds majority of votes cast.

7. APPROVING THE HP PLAN

The Committee will publish a draft of the HP Plan for consultation and approval by the community within the HP Area.

The method through which the consultation process and approval of the HP Plan shall be effected shall be agreed at a General Meeting of the HP Planning Group.

8. WORKING GROUPS

- a. The Committee may appoint such Working Groups as it considers necessary to carry out functions specified by the Committee. Each Working Group should have a nominated chair but this person does not have to be a member of the Committee.
- b. Working groups do not have power to authorise expenditure on behalf of the Committee. Working Groups will be bound by the terms of reference set out for them by the Committee.

9. FINANCE

- a. The financial transactions of the HP Planning Group shall require two signatories who are not related to each other and who include one of the Officers.
- b. The Treasurer will draw up and agree with the Committee procedures for payment of invoices and expenses.
- c. The Treasurer shall keep a clear record of expenditure, where necessary supported by receipted invoices.
- d. Before expenditures in excess of £100 are incurred, approval must be obtained by way of a majority vote by the Committee.
- e. The Treasurer will be responsible for setting up the HP Planning Group's own banking arrangements and will operate any bank accounts in accordance with paragraph 9.a. above.
- f. The Treasurer will report back to the Committee on planned and actual expenditure.
- g. The Treasurer's records and statements shall be subject to ongoing review by the appropriate officers of the Council in accordance with paragraph 3.d. above and shall be made available for any member of the HP planning Group to view upon request.
- h. The Treasurer's records and statements shall be presented at each Annual General Meeting.

10. AFFILIATIONS

The HP Planning Group shall not be affiliated to any political or religious organisation.

11. COMPLAINTS

In case of complaint, an individual member or the HP Planning Group can refer it to the Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee will be responsible for establishing a procedure for handling complaints.

12. DISSOLUTION

- a. The HP Planning Group may be dissolved by a resolution passed by a simple two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a Special General Meeting.
- b. If confirmed, the Committee shall distribute any assets remaining after the payment of all bills to other group(s) or organisation(s) having aims similar to the HP Planning Group or some other purpose(s) as the HP Planning Group may decide. The return of any funding given as grants should be considered if it was a condition of the grant.

13. GOVERNANCE

The HP Planning Group shall observe the principles of good governance for the voluntary and community sector as developed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.