

1. NAME

The Forum, established under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, is to be known as “*Knighton Neighbourhood Forum*” (hereafter referred to as “the Forum”).

2. LIFE

The life of the Forum is the period of designation of the Forum as a “designated authority” within the meaning of the Localism Act 2011. On or before the expiration of any such designation the Forum shall consider, at a General Meeting, whether it wishes to continue and seek renewal of that designated status.

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

The area governed by the Forum is that shown on the plan shown at Appendix A of this Constitution (hereafter referred to as the “Neighbourhood Area”), and shall at all times reflect the Neighbourhood Area approved by the Local Authority.

4. AIM

The overall aim of the Forum is to promote and enhance the physical, social and economic environment of the Neighbourhood Area.

5. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Forum are:

- (a) To prepare and seek approval for a sustainable Neighbourhood Plan (as defined by the Localism Act 2011);
- (b) To keep the approved Neighbourhood Plan under review to ensure its relevance and appropriateness to the changing needs of the Neighbourhood Area;
- (c) To encourage and promote the goodwill and involvement of the wider community throughout the Neighbourhood Area, to ensure full participation in, and ownership of, the preparation, production, development and implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan;
- (d) To ensure effective implementation of the policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan, so far as it is within the power of the Forum to do so;
- (e) To foster, encourage and develop high standards of planning appropriate to the needs of the Neighbourhood Area.

6. POWERS

In furtherance of the aim and objectives, but not otherwise, the Forum may:

- (a) Prepare a Neighbourhood Plan and do anything reasonably necessary to secure its creation and approval; in that regard the provisions of para 13 below shall apply;

- (b) Work with groups of a similar nature, and may exchange information, advice and knowledge (other than details of its membership), including co-operation with other voluntary bodies, charities, statutory and non statutory bodies, but subject to the provision of para 8 hereof;
- (c) Establish working groups, or co-opt individuals to the Forum or its Steering Group, to assist in the achievement of all or any of the Objectives, subject to the provisions of para 12(g) below;
- (d) Exercise any powers conferred by law upon the Forum as a “Qualifying Authority” (as defined by the Localism Act 2011);
- (e) For the fulfilment of its objectives, to raise money by seeking grants or donations or by fundraising activities, but not by the imposition of a levy or fee on members;
- (f) Take any form of action that is lawful, which is reasonably necessary to achieve the objectives of the Forum.

7. VALUES

- (a) The Forum shall operate in accordance with the following principles – selflessness; consideration for others; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty, freedom of speech; leadership. It shall at all times act in a way free from discrimination on grounds of gender, age, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, disability or physical characteristics.
- (b) Any member shall declare any pecuniary interest that he or she may have in any decision or discussion of the Forum, and shall declare any personal or business interest that objectively may be reasonably considered to relate to any such discussion or decision.
- (c) The Forum shall seek to maximise participation in its work from across the Neighbourhood Area

8. AFFILIATIONS

The Forum shall not be affiliated to, or promote the interests of, any political party or organisation.

9. MEMBERSHIPS

- (a) There shall be a minimum of 21 members, or such other minimum number as may from time to time be prescribed by law. The Secretary shall maintain and keep up to date a register of members and junior members.
- (b) Any individual residing or working in the Neighbourhood Area and who has attained the age of 16 shall be eligible to become a member of the Forum. An individual aged under 16 is eligible to become a Junior Member, but without voting rights or eligibility to be elected to the Steering Group.
- (c) Membership of the Forum is open to any constituted voluntary or community group which operates in the Neighbourhood Area. Such a group may nominate up to two representatives, but only one such nominee shall have the right to vote on and occasion when a vote is taken.
- (d) Any individual elected as a representative for any local authority ward falling in whole or in part within the Neighbourhood Area is entitled to become a member and to remain so during his or her period of office.

(e) The Forum shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that individuals from all parts of the Neighbourhood Area are aware of, and have the opportunity to join, the Forum, and attend its meetings, and the Forum shall promote opportunities of membership across the Neighbourhood Area.

(f) Any individual eligible to join the Forum shall be entitled to do so. A member or junior member shall cease to be so if that individual ceases to satisfy the criteria for membership set out in paras 9(a), (b) or (c) above, or is excluded from membership by virtue of para 15 below.

11. GOVERNANCE

(a) The Forum shall operate through *General* and *Annual General Meetings* at which all Members and Junior Members shall be entitled to attend. The day to day management of, and leadership of the Forum shall be conducted by a *Steering Group*, and by the individual officers prescribed by para 12(h) hereof, who shall be elected in accordance with the provisions of para 12.

(b) At any meeting of the Forum or Steering Group any member shall declare any financial, personal or business interest relevant to the matter being discussed or determined.

12. FORUM MEETINGS

General Meetings

(a) Within each period of 12 months there shall be an Annual General Meeting and a minimum of 3 General Meetings of the Forum. All Members and Junior Members of the Forum shall be entitled to attend. The AGM shall be chaired by the Chair of the Steering Group or (in his or her absence, the Vice Chair).

(b) Notice of, and the Agenda for the AGM or a General Meeting shall (in the case of the AGM) be given to each Member not less than 14 days prior to the date of the meeting, in writing or by electronic communication. In respect of General Meetings of the Forum the relevant period of notice shall be 7 days.

(c) The Agenda for an Annual General Meeting shall include (i) the election of a Steering Group constituted in accordance with para 12(h) below; (ii) a report by the Treasurer on the financial position of the Forum. The process of election shall be as determined by the Forum from time to time, but shall be fair and appropriate.

(d) Proper records of each meeting of the Forum shall be kept.

(e) Subject to the provisions of para 12(f) below, the quorum for a meeting of the Forum is 11 members who are entitled to vote.

(f) The quorum for any of the following matters shall be 11 members (other than members of the Steering Group, and who are entitled to vote-

(i) Election or re-election of members of the Steering Group;

(ii) Removal of membership of a member of the Forum or Steering Group under para 14(a) or (c) below

- (iii) Approval of Accounts under para 14 below;
- (iv) Alteration to the Constitution under para 15 below;
- (v) Final approval of a draft Neighbourhood Plan.

(g) The Forum shall endeavour to proceed by consensus, but where any vote is taken and is tied, the Chair shall have a casting vote. The conduct generally of any such meeting is a matter for the Chair to determine with due regard to the Values set out at para 7 above.

Steering Group

(h) There shall be a Steering Group which shall comprise (a) Chair; (b) Vice Chair; (c) Treasurer (d) Secretary (e) three other Members who are entitled to vote at the Forum. Individuals (whether members of the Forum or otherwise) may be co-opted from time to time but shall not in total number exceed the number of members who have been elected to the Steering Group by the Forum.

(i) The quorum for the Steering Group shall be 3 members of that Group.

(j) The Steering Group shall meet as often as is necessary for the effective functioning of the Forum, but, in any event, shall hold a minimum 4 meetings each year. Where possible, 7 days notice of a meeting shall be given to Steering Group members.

(k) Proper records of the meetings of the Steering Group shall be kept, and a Report made to the next meeting of the Forum.

Officers

(l) Only members of the Forum who are entitled to vote by virtue of para 9 above shall be eligible for election as an officer of the Forum.

Chair

(m) The Chair will have the following responsibilities: leadership and co-ordination of the Forum; chairing the AGM and general meetings of the Forum, including the casting of a casting vote in any case where any vote is tied; chairing the Steering Group; the power to decide urgent matters that need determination between meetings of the Forum and Steering Group; to act as a primary spokesperson for the Forum.

Vice Chair

(n) To act in the absence of, or otherwise behalf of, the Chair.

Secretary

(o) To create and maintain a database of members, their addresses and contact details; to keep proper records of meetings of the Forum and of the Steering Group, and the proper dissemination of notes of meetings; to maintain a register of declared interests.

Treasurer

(p) To have primary responsibility for managing the financial affairs of the Forum; to keep proper records of income and expenditure; financial planning for the Forum; the making of regular Financial Reports to the Steering Group and Forum; to ensure compliance with any financial reporting requirements of any grant awarding body.

13 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

(a) Any neighbourhood plan shall be approved by a majority of those voting at a General Meeting of the Forum.

(b) Consultations on any draft Neighbourhood Plan shall take place with residents and businesses in the Neighbourhood Area, whether members of the Forum or not, prior to consideration of its approval by the Forum.

(c) The Forum shall delegate to the Steering Group any work with the Local Authority or any independent experts and advisors, subject to reports back being made to a General Meeting from time to time.

14. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) All funds shall be applied for the attainment of all or any objectives of the Forum and for no other purpose. Income and expenditure shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer, who has the responsibility to ensure that funds are used effectively and that the Forum stays within its budget.

(b) A Bank Account shall be opened in the name of the Forum into which all income shall be paid: expenditure must be authorised by two signatories drawn from the Steering Group, one of whom shall be the Treasurer.

(c) An Annual financial statement shall be prepared by the Treasurer and presented for approval to the AGM.

(d) The accounts of the Forum shall be scrutinised prior to each AGM by an appropriate individual who is not a member of the Steering Group. The accounts of the Forum shall be subject to the audit procedures and accountability protocols required by any grant awarding authority or body.

15. REPLACEMENT OR REMOVAL OF MEMBERS OF FORUM OR STEERING GROUP

(a) A Member shall not be removed from the Forum unless he or she is preventing the Forum from conducting its business, or is in significant breach of the Values of the Forum. In any such alleged instance the member shall be given a minimum of 7 days notice of a resolution for removal to be proposed at a General Meeting, and which must be approved by a majority of members present and voting at a General Meeting. An individual may also be removed from the list of members if he or she ceases to be eligible to be a member.

(b) A member of the Steering Group may be removed from the Steering Group by a vote of a majority of members present and voting at a General meeting, notice of the intention to do so have been given to that individual not less than 7 days in advance of that meeting.

(c) If an officer of the Steering Group is unable to perform his or her functions, for whatever reason, he or she may be replaced at the next General Meeting.

(d) Without prejudice to the specific provisions of paras (a) and (b) above, the process adopted for the removal of any Member of the Forum or Steering Group shall be open and fair.

15. ALTERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Any changes to this constitution must be agreed by a majority of those voting at an AGM or General Meeting of the Forum, notice of such change having been given in writing or in electronic form at least 7 days prior to that meeting.

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16. DISSOLUTION OF THE FORUM

(a) The Forum shall cease to exist if it resolves to dissolve itself by a two-thirds majority of those attending and voting at a General Meeting, 14 days notice of an intention to seek dissolution having been given to all members in writing or by electronic communication. The Forum shall also be dissolved if its status as a “Designated Authority” is revoked by the Local Authority.

(b) If the Forum is dissolved then any residual funds which the Forum possesses and is entitled in such circumstances to retain shall be distributed at the discretion of the majority attending and voting at a General Meeting to to any organisation or organisations whose purposes include the promotion of good planning or enhancement of the environment of all or any part of the Neighbourhood Area.