

Queen's Park Ward Area Neighbourhood Forum Constitution

This document is the constitution for the Neighbourhood Forum established for the Queen's Park Ward Area in Bournemouth, Dorset.

In the absence of a Parish Council, the Forum is a Neighbourhood Forum as defined in paragraph 61F (5) of the Localism Act 2011 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/schedule/9/enacted>).

DEFINITIONS

Name of Organisation

Queen's Park Ward Area Neighbourhood Forum, hereafter referred to as the "Forum".

Neighbourhood Area

The electoral ward of Queen's Park plus the western side of Charminster Road where that road borders the ward (note that the ward generally includes only the 'inner' sides of its boundary roads), hereafter referred to as the "Neighbourhood".

Neighbourhood Plan

The Queen's Park Neighbourhood Development Plan, hereafter in this document referred to as the "Plan".

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Forum is to promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Neighbourhood¹.

The purpose will be pursued by seeking to develop, gain approval for and sustain a Neighbourhood Plan for the Neighbourhood.

¹Localism Act 2011, para 61F (5)

AIMS

The aims of the Forum are to achieve its purpose through production of the Plan.

This encompasses:

- Improving the Neighbourhood as an attractive, enjoyable and safe place for residents, workers and visitors of all ages.
- Preserving and improving the character of the Neighbourhood.
- Encouraging balance and quality in developments consistent with their locations in the Neighbourhood.
- Encouraging and promoting civic pride, positive perceptions, goodwill, involvement and cohesion in our diverse community
- Celebrating and supporting the cultural diversity of the neighbourhood and promoting an inclusive community.

The Forum's activities will seek to define and agree local planning policies for the Neighbourhood to:

- Promote a positive image of the Neighbourhood; protect, preserve and promote its history and heritage.
- Encourage more families into the neighbourhood and provide a family-friendly environment.
- Promote the health and wellbeing of all residents of the neighbourhood.
- Preserve the character of the area and its green spaces, manage population densities, traffic and parking.
- Provide the necessary infrastructure and community facilities for living and doing business in the neighbourhood.
- Encourage and promote the Neighbourhood as a place to visit, do business and be creative.
- Improve the quality, design and upkeep of properties and conversions.
- Promote environmental improvement and conservation by educating, encouraging and assisting the local population in environmental practice, working in partnership with similar groups and organisations.

MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership of the Forum is open to:
 - Individuals who live in the Neighbourhood
 - Individuals who work in the Neighbourhood
 - Individuals who are elected members of the Neighbourhood
2. The Forum shall maintain a minimum membership of 21 individuals, each of whom meets the membership eligibility above.
3. The Forum shall use its best endeavours to maintain a minimum of one member from each of the eligibility categories above.
4. The Forum will be as representative as possible of the people who live or work in the Neighbourhood. Membership will be drawn from different parts of the Neighbourhood and from different sections of the community, in so far as volunteers are available.
5. Offensive behaviour, inflammatory remarks, bullying or disruptive or discriminatory behaviour² is not permitted. Members exhibiting such may be asked not to attend further meetings and, if an apology is not given or the behaviour is repeated, to leave the Forum³.
6. A list of members shall be kept by the Secretary. Membership will begin as soon as a completed membership form has been received.
7. Members may resign at any time by writing to the Steering Group.
8. Membership must be renewed annually by e-mail, post or at the AGM.
9. The Secretary shall also maintain a list of people who have indicated interest in the Forum. In the event of membership numbers falling, people on this list shall be encouraged to join the Forum. Replacement members shall be in place as soon as reasonably possible; in any event, the Forum's membership shall meet the minimum required at each AGM.

² Including but not limited to racist, sexist, homophobic, disphobic and transphobic discrimination or remarks. The Forum shall thus be committed to Equal Opportunities.

³ The individual concerned shall have the right to an appeal heard by the Steering Group, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

ORGANISATION

The Forum shall be led by a “Steering Group” that is responsible for achievement of the Forum’s Purpose. They will plan and identify activities requiring Working Groups. Each Working Group will have particular tasks that contribute towards the overall Purpose. The Steering Group is accountable to the AGM.

The Steering Group will be chosen from the Forum members, led by the Forum’s Chairperson, including a Treasurer, Secretary and Vice-Chairperson (the four “Elected Officers”) and shall consist of between 5 and 9 members in total at any time (see Meetings section). The Chairperson has a casting vote in all votes.

All Working groups are accountable to the Steering Group. The Steering Group shall delegate a person from the membership of each working group who will lead that group’s activities. This leader will co-ordinate with the Steering Group, including reporting progress and issues⁴. Working Group leaders have a casting vote within their working groups.

Working Groups will be constituted from members of the Forum but will also seek support and assistance from volunteers eligible for membership but who have chosen not to join⁵. These people will typically be identified from wider consultation exercises and will support the aims of inclusivity and breadth of involvement. Working groups shall consult publicly as appropriate across the Neighbourhood.

All voting will be by a show of hands unless the need for a formal ballot is demonstrated.

MEETINGS

This section describes the formal meetings of the Forum. The ethos of the Forum’s work shall be to seek views from a range of people in the Neighbourhood, including by holding multiple public meetings.

Annual General Meeting

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held nominally annually but in any event within 15 months of the previous AGM. They shall be open to Forum members, who all may vote.

Notice of an AGM shall be given to all Forum members in writing at least 21 days in advance. An AGM shall be quorate if at least 25% (minimum 10) of Forum members are present⁶.

At the AGM, reports on progress to date and on the Forum’s finances shall be presented. The Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and Vice-Chairperson shall be (re)elected for the coming year. Vacancies caused by resignation of Elected Officers shall also be filled at the next AGM.

⁴ The working group leader will usually also be a member of the Steering Group.

⁵ This wider group of people includes those on the Secretary’s list of those who have indicated an interest in joining.

⁶ If a meeting is not quorate, then it will be adjourned and members given at least 7 days notice for another meeting restricted to the same agenda. That meeting will be considered quorate, whoever attends.

Each candidate shall be nominated by at least 2 Forum members. Election shall be by a simple majority of votes in a single vote for each role.

The remainder of the Steering Group shall be determined separately, being members of the Forum invited by the Elected Officers to join. Membership shall be within the constraints of the overall size of the Steering Group and all invitations shall be reviewed at least annually by the Elected Officers. A vote of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the attendance of any quorate AGM/SGM is required to challenge any of the Elected Officers' decisions on inviting or declining Steering Group membership.

Any proposals from members given to the Secretary at least 7 days in advance of the meeting shall be discussed.

Proposals to amend this constitution also require 7 days notice. A vote of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the attendance of any quorate AGM/SGM is required to approve such a change.

Special General Meetings

A Special General Meeting (SGM) shall be called by the Secretary at the request of at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Steering Group, or at least 25% (minimum 10) of Forum members.

The meeting shall take place within 28 days of the request. It shall otherwise follow the rules of the AGM.

Other Meetings

Both the Steering Group and the Working Groups shall meet regularly as determined by their needs and their leaders.

The Forum will also publicise its work and progress whilst developing the Plan by various means that will include at least two public meetings per year. The purpose of these meetings will be to test neighbourhood opinion on the Forum's work, for example by focusing on specific topics.

FINANCES

All expenditure shall be approved in advance by the Steering Group. Small budgets may be delegated by the Team to working group leaders for specific purposes. All money raised by or on behalf of the Forum is only to be used to further the Aims of the Forum as specified in this Constitution.

An account shall be maintained on behalf of the Forum at HSBC bank. Between two and three cheque signatories will be nominated by the Steering Group (one to be the Treasurer). All cheques shall require two signatures and no cheque signatories may be related or members of the same household.

Records of income and expenditure shall be maintained by the Treasurer and be summarised in the financial statement given at each AGM/SGM.

EXECUTION OF ACTIVITIES

In meetings and activities, all members shall act in the best interests of the Forum and the residents of the Neighbourhood. Members shall abide by the scope and decisions of the Steering Group except where changes in circumstances may warrant changes.

Conflicts of interest must be declared as soon as they become apparent; possible conflicts must also be declared for discussion with in the appropriate group. The chairperson of that group shall determine the relevance of any declaration and the declarer should follow any request to recuse themselves from votes etc.

Where a member can reasonably foresee a future conflict of interest (eg working for or belonging to an organisation that might have a financial interest in the decisions of the Forum) they should declare this when going the Forum. Owning a property or business in the neighbourhood is not in itself a conflict of interest.

DURATION

The Forum shall exist for 5 years⁷ from its formal designation by Bournemouth Borough Council. At its AGM (see Meetings) at the end of year 4, consideration shall be given to a continuing or successor organisation to sustain the Plan.

DISSOLUTION

A move to close down the Forum may be made by calling an SGM (according to the normal criteria) to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to agree dissolution the Forum.

If dissolution is agreed, all remaining money and other assets (net of outstanding debts) shall be donated to a local charitable organisation. The charitable organisation shall be agreed at the meeting.

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⁷ Localism Act 2011, para 61F (8) (a)