



Friends of New Forest Village

Constitution v 0.3

October 2012

Constitution

Name of the Organisation:

The name of the organisation is FRIENDS OF NEW FOREST VILLAGE and is referred to below as the Friends.

Aims and Objectives:

The Friends will:

- promote and protect the interests of the residents of New Forest Village;
- bring residents together to discuss and debate views on a wide range of issues affecting the area;
- represent decisions of residents to various agencies / bodies delivering services in the area;
- facilitate residents' participation in the decision-making processes that affects them;
- encourage the goodwill and involvement of the wider community; and
- foster community spirit and encourage civic pride.

Powers

In furtherance of the aims and objectives, but not otherwise, the Committee may exercise the power to:

- Invite and receive contributions and raise funds where appropriate, to finance the work of the Friends, and to open a bank account to manage such funds;
- Publicise and promote the work of the Friends and organise meetings, events etc.
- Work with groups of a similar nature and exchange information, advice and knowledge with them, including cooperation with other voluntary bodies, charities, statutory and non-statutory organisations;
- Employ staff and volunteers (who shall not be members of the Committee) as are necessary to conduct activities to meet the aims and objectives;
- Select working groups to take responsibility for the work of the Friends; and
- Take any form of action that is lawful, which is necessary to achieve the objects of the Friends.

Membership:

Membership of the Friends shall be open to the following, irrespective of political party, nationality, religion or political opinion:

- People aged sixteen years or over living within the New Forest Village who subscribe to the aims of the Friends and who notify the Secretary that they would like to be a member. Such members shall be called Individual Members and shall be entitled to vote at meetings of the Friends;
- Organisations within the area of benefit, whether voluntary or statutory, may upon application to and with the approval of the Committee be admitted as Affiliated Members and such approval shall not be unreasonably withheld. Affiliated Members shall not have the right to vote at meetings of the Friends;
- Well-wishers anywhere or persons who, in the opinion of the Committee, have special knowledge or experience to offer to the Friends; such members shall be called Associate Members and shall not have the right to vote at meetings of the Friends.

There is no subscription for joining. The Secretary or Treasurer will keep a record of members.

Members meetings and events will be held as necessary to decide the objectives of the group and to direct its work. Decisions will normally be taken by consensus but, if considered necessary by the meeting, by majority vote.

Members will be encouraged to get actively involved in the work of the Friends. Anyone acting on behalf of the Friends will be expected to act in an appropriate manner, and to follow the general policies agreed by the members at the General Meetings.

The Committee/Officers of the organisation:

The officers of the Friends will be a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Officers will be elected at an Annual General Meeting for one year, with no limit on the number of times that they can be re-elected. Officers will not be paid. Officers may be removed by a decision taken by a GM, an SGM or AGM if they do not attend meetings or carry out their duties for four months. Officers may leave at any time by notifying a members' meeting and the vacancies will be filled at a GM, an SGM or AGM. Officers' powers and responsibilities will be defined by members at an AGM.

The officers can meet in between the general meetings in order to manage the affairs of the Friends including:

- planning general meetings of the group and other activities in the park
- working on funding bids
- passing on the views of members to people responsible for the park such as employees of Leeds City Council, regeneration boards, councillors, police
- meeting with other community groups
- managing the finances and publicity of the group

General Meetings (GMs)

General Meetings will take place at least once every two months. These meetings will be publicised in good time to members and users.

Members will be able to suggest agenda items in advance of these meetings and at these meetings members of working groups will provide members with an update on their activities.

The General Meetings shall be the decision-making body of the group. The Chair or an officer authorised by the Chair will conduct the meeting. All members will have a right to attend and to vote. Decisions shall be by consensus where possible, or by a simple majority vote where necessary except for amendments to the Constitution which require a two-thirds majority at GMs, SGMs or the AGM. A quorum shall be four members except at the AGM where it will be six. If there isn't a quorum, any decisions made regarding policy must be ratified at the following meeting. General Meetings may decide to set up working groups, or to delegate any relevant tasks to individual members.

Annual General Meeting (AGM):

An AGM will be held once a year, after the accounts for the previous financial year are available. The Secretary will advertise the meeting to members at least two weeks before it takes place. The Secretary will also advertise the meeting to the non-members in the New Forest Village

Six members will form a quorum (the minimum number of people needed at the meeting in order to make decisions). The Chair or an officer authorised by the Chair will conduct the meeting.

At this meeting the members will:

- Hear a report on the activities of the Friends for the previous year - and on the group's finances, prepared by the Treasurer;
- Decide whether there will be a membership subscription for the forthcoming year;
- Identify and discuss matters of particular importance for the forthcoming year;
- Make rules on the way the Friends group will operate e.g. by amending the Constitution;
- Discuss the details of any working groups;
- Elect members to the posts of officers;
- Conduct any other relevant business the meeting so decides.

Everybody on the membership list will receive at least two weeks notice of the Annual General Meeting by a mailing to the email addresses on the membership list and by putting up notices on the webpage. Members will also receive information on how to become active in the Friends' activities and join any working groups.

The AGM will review the group's finances, authorise the scope of proposed activities, elect officers, and address any other issue brought forward by a member. Any member may put forward a motion or resolution by giving it to the Secretary before the meeting.

Special General Meeting (SGM):

An SGM may be called at the request of any member with the agreement of an officer. An SGM can perform the same functions as an AGM. The Secretary will inform all members of an SGM at least one week before it takes place.

Finance:

The Treasurer will keep the Friends' financial accounts and records, prepare annual accounts, and control expenditure. The Treasurer will be responsible for setting up and managing the Friends' bank account, and will approve signature of cheques (two signatures from among three specified officers, who will normally be the Chair, the Secretary and the Treasurer). All money received in the form of donations, subscriptions or any other contributions will be put into the bank account and will be used to further the aims of the Friends.

The annual accounts shall be independently verified, and the books shall be made available for inspection on request at the AGM. Officers and members of the Friends may not act as the independent examiner.

Winding up:

If a General Meeting wish at any time to dissolve the Friends, they should give to all members at least two weeks' notice of a Special General Meeting to discuss this. If such a decision is agreed at that meeting by a simple majority of those members present and voting, the assets will be disposed of to another voluntary organisation with compatible aims and principles, this group being agreed at the same meeting. If no organisation exists then the assets will be transferred to a nominated local charity.

Changing the constitution:

The constitution may be changed at a GM, an SGM special or an AGM. A proposal for changing the constitution will be circulated by the Secretary at least one week before the meeting. The decision will normally be taken by consensus, unless the members decide that a majority vote should be used, in which case it will satisfy the requirements under "General Meetings" above. Any changes to the constitution must not lead to designated funds contributed for one purpose being diverted to some quite different purpose. A draft of the new constitution will be placed on the webpage for viewing by members. Comments can then be made by a date decided at the meeting.