

Constitution of Garforth Neighbourhood Planning Forum

1.0 Name and Area

- 1.1 The name of the Forum shall be the Garforth Neighbourhood Planning Forum.
- 1.2 The area covered by the Forum shall be the area as shown on the attached map, known as the Garforth Neighbourhood Planning Area.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The aims and objectives of the Neighbourhood Forum are to:
 - a) Promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of Garforth;
 - b) Undertake planning for Garforth;
 - c) Identify ways, in consultation with relevant authorities and organisations, of involving the whole community and gathering, analysing and presenting their views and opinions to ensure the Plan is as comprehensive and inclusive as possible;
 - d) Take responsibility for planning, budgeting and monitoring expenditure of neighbourhood planning work, including identifying possible sources of funding;
 - e) Ensure that its neighbourhood planning work conforms with local and national planning policies;
 - f) Ensure that its neighbourhood planning work shall not be affiliated to any political party or organisation;
 - g) Continue working for an improved Garforth and continue the Forum as deemed necessary beyond any formal neighbourhood planning activity.
 - h) Preservation of Green Belt land within the area of Garforth, wherever possible.

3.0 Powers

- 3.1 In pursuance of these aims and objectives, the Neighbourhood Forum will:
 - a) Undertake neighbourhood planning on behalf of the community within the designated boundary referred to in Section 1.2;
 - b) Maintain a Forum website giving details of the Forum, including a map of the designated Garforth Neighbourhood Planning Area, the contact details of the Chair and Secretary, this Constitution and policies agreed by the Forum, notices, agendas and minutes of meetings;
 - c) Undertake any other neighbourhood planning or more general Town and Country Planning activity considered appropriate in order to provide for the proper planning of the area of Garforth;

- d) Organise at least four Open (public) Meetings or other equivalent events per year, including an Annual General Meeting (AGM), to which all Forum members will be invited;
- e) Raise money or apply for funding as necessary;
- f) Contract with professionals or recruit volunteers;
- g) Buy or rent premises/equipment/employ services as required;
- h) Conduct research;
- i) Work in partnership with different organisations;
- j) Carry out anything else within the law necessary to reach the group's aims and objectives.

4.0 Values

4.1 The Forum and its Steering Group members aim to follow the 'Nolan Principles' of public life. That is, they aim to act with:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty

and seek to promote these values by leadership and example.

4.2 The Forum is committed to equality of opportunity in all of its activities.

5.0 Annual General Meetings (AGM)

5.1 Each AGM will be held within three months of the designated end of the financial year.

5.2 The agenda for each AGM will include:

- a) Consideration of any business announced in the AGM agenda;
- b) Consideration of the Annual Report of work done by the Forum;
- c) Election of a Steering Group of no fewer than 7 and no more than 21 members who will work as described in this Constitution to run the business of the Forum and to make decisions on its behalf between AGM's (see Section 6.0);
- d) Submission and adoption of independently examined accounts for the Forum, consisting of a statement of income and expenditure and a balance sheet for the previous financial year;
- e) A review of the rules and policies of the Forum, including of this Constitution and the Equal Opportunities Policy.

6.0 The Steering Group

- 6.1 A Steering Group will be appointed at the Forum's AGM, which will be responsible for the day to day business of the Forum and will meet at least 6 times a year.
- 6.2 The Steering Group will comprise no more than 21 members, the majority of whom will be voting members of the Forum and be resident in the Garforth Neighbourhood Area.
- 6.3 The Steering Group will appoint a Forum Chair, Secretary and Treasurer at its first meeting and thereafter at the AGM.
- 6.4 The Steering Group may co-opt up to 3 additional members who will retire at each AGM.
- 6.5 The quorum for any Steering Group meeting shall be at least 13 Steering Group members.
- 6.6 Notification of Steering Group agenda will be sent out at least 7 days before the date of the meeting to all Steering Group members.
- 6.7 The Steering Group may dismiss any Steering Group member at a quorate Steering Group meeting at which this is an agenda item if at least two thirds of Steering Group members present vote to do so.
- 6.8 Any Steering Group member absent for three consecutive meetings, with no acceptable explanation or apologies, will be deemed to be dismissed / retired and the next Steering Group meeting will be informed of any dismissal / retirement.
- 6.9 The Steering Group will set up such sub-groups as are deemed necessary to consider issues as they arise. These subgroups will seek additional input from appropriately informed members of the General Forum and/or recommended consultants where necessary. All sub-groups will report back to the Steering Group for ratification of any decisions reached.

7.0 Rules at Meetings

- 7.1 The following rules apply to all meetings, including Open Meetings, Steering Group Meetings and the AGM:
 - a) Chairing – each meeting has a chair. The chair of the meeting ensures that the business of the meeting is transacted in an orderly and respectful way.
 - b) Decision Making – the Forum endeavours to make decisions by consensus, but in the case of a vote: decisions are made by simple majority of those present and entitled to vote. When the vote is tied, the chair of the meeting has a second, casting, vote.
 - c) Speaking – all members are entitled to speak at meetings and, at Open Meetings, all members of the public are entitled to speak. The chair of the meeting has the power to impose time limits on speeches.

- d) Quora – the number of people who need to be present for decisions involving a vote is given elsewhere in this Constitution. There is no quorum for public meetings because they are not decision making meetings.

8.0 Membership

8.1 There are two classes of membership:

- (a) Voting members
- (b) Non- voting members

8.2 All applications for membership shall be made in writing to the Secretary of the Neighbourhood Forum, stating the class of membership sought.

a) Voting Members

8.3 Voting members must be over 18 years of age, can attend Forum meetings and are eligible to vote on proposals put forward by the Forum.

8.4 There must be a minimum of 21 voting members made up of the following:

- a) Individuals who live in the Garforth Neighbourhood Planning Area Boundary;
- b) Individuals who work in the Garforth Neighbourhood Planning Area Boundary (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise);

8.5 Initial applications will be considered at a founding Open Meeting of the Forum and deemed accepted if a majority of those voting at the meeting approve them.

8.6 Applications can be made by individuals, corporate bodies or voluntary groups. Corporate bodies or voluntary groups which are accepted into membership must designate an individual empowered to represent them.

8.7 Subsequent applications will be considered at Open Meetings of the Forum and deemed accepted if approved by a simple majority of voting members present.

8.8 All members of the Forum have a duty to declare at application stage, any financial, party political, employment, land ownership and other organisation that could have an impact on their, or the Forums work.

8.9 Membership of any individual, corporate body or voluntary group can be terminated at an Open Meeting where this has been specified as an agenda item and two thirds of voting members present vote in favour of termination.

8.10 Any voting member who wishes to resign must provide the Secretary with written notice stating with either:

- a) Immediate effect
- b) A time frame deemed acceptable by the majority of voting members

- 8.11 The Chairman will have the casting vote on matters relating to elections and resolutions, and all voting will be determined by a show of hands.

b) Non-voting members

- 8.12 Once 21 voting members have been accepted into the Forum, non-voting members will be permitted to join.
- 8.13 Non voting members are not eligible to vote on proposals put forward by the Forum. However, they can:
- a) Attend Forum meetings
 - b) Submit comments to the Forum
 - c) Attend open meetings
- 8.14 Non membership is open to individuals who do not meet the requirements to become a voting member, but have an interest in assisting the Group to achieve its aim.
- 8.15 There is a minimum age limit of 16 years old on this membership.
- 8.16 Individuals who are elected members of the City Council and / or the elected Member of Parliament, whose area falls within the Garforth Neighbourhood Planning Area Boundary are non-voting members.

9.0 Finance

- 9.1 Any monies acquired by the Forum shall only be used to help achieve the aims and objectives of the Forum as set out in Section 2.0 of this Constitution.
- 9.2 The treasurer shall keep a proper account of the finances of the Forum, where necessary supported by receipts or invoices, and shall ensure that the Forum has a bank account in its own name.
- 9.3 All transactions in any format must be authorised by any two of the appointed officials (Chair, Treasurer or Secretary). Transactions over £5,000 must be without exception, authorised by all three appointed officials.

10.0 Complaints

- 10.1 Any complaints about the behaviour of a member of the Forum or sub Task-Groups, in relation to the work undertaken shall be made in confidence, in writing to the Secretary unless the complaint is about the Secretary in which case it shall be made to the Chair.
- 10.2 The elected officers of the Forum will investigate the complaint and decide on action as appropriate. If the complaint concerns the officers themselves, other members of the forum will be appointed in their place.

- 10.3 Appeals will be held by three members of the Steering Group who have not been involved in investigating the complaint or determining action.

11.0 Alteration of Constitution

- 11.1 This Constitution can only be changed at an AGM or EGM of the Forum. Any change to the Constitution requires a simple majority of votes of the members present and who are entitled to vote.

12.0 Disbanding of Forum

- 12.1 The Forum can only be disbanded at a duly advertised Extraordinary General Meeting called for the purpose of deciding whether to disband, to which all Forum members shall be invited. The decision to disband the Forum shall be taken if supported by two thirds of voting members at the Special General Meeting.
- 12.2 If the Forum is disbanded, any assets held in the name of the Forum (after payment of all debts and liabilities) will be disposed of to other organisations having similar objectives to those of the Forum as agreed by a majority of remaining voting members.

Date adopted: 10/07/14

Signatures: Alan Tynan, John Blake, Sue McQuire

Attachment

