

Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Forum

Constitution

1. Name and Area

- 1.1 The name of the organisation shall be 'Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Forum' ('the Forum').
- 1.2 The designated Area shall be the un-parished area of Horsham Town ('the Area').
- 1.3 The Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Forum is a neighbourhood forum as defined in the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 ('the Act').
- 1.4 The Forum is non-political and fully inclusive in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and will actively aim for as wide a representation of communities in the area as possible.

2. Purposes and Objectives

- 2.1 To promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Area.
- 2.2 To produce and maintain a Neighbourhood Development Plan as defined in section 9.
- 2.3 To initiate Neighbourhood Development Orders or Community Right to Build Orders, identify Assets of Community Value or carry out any other permitted actions if required.

3. Neighbourhood Forum Membership

- 3.1 Membership will comprise at least 21 individuals who are residents living in the Area, individuals working in the Area, or elected ward councillors for the Area.
- 3.2 Local representative groups, organisations and societies may have membership of the Forum, and be represented by one named person.
- 3.3 The nominated representatives should represent their group's view, which may not necessarily be their own view and they should always indicate whether they are representing themselves or their group.
- 3.4 Members of local representative groups, organisations and societies may be members in their own right under clause 3.1.
- 3.5 Any person under 16 years old will require parental consent to join.

4. Forum Steering Group

- 4.1 The business of the Forum will be managed by a Steering Group.
- 4.2 The Steering Group will co-ordinate, implement and monitor the work of the Forum including developing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Area. It will prioritise, schedule and publicise the work of the Forum.

- 4.3 The Steering Group shall consist of a minimum of 6 members and a maximum of 15 members, including one representative from each of the three Neighbourhood Councils, one member from Horsham Town Community Partnership and one member from Horsham Society.
- 4.4 The Steering Group shall be elected by the members at the Annual General Meeting. Steering Group members will serve for one year and be subject to re-election.
- 4.5 Each person wishing to stand for election to the Steering Group shall provide a short profile which will be sent to members with the notices for the Annual General Meeting.
- 4.6 The Steering Group shall include a Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, who shall be elected by the members following the election of the Steering Group.
- 4.7 Other members of the Steering Group will be given defined roles.
- 4.8 The Steering Group shall meet at least six times a year. Members are expected to attend 75% of the meetings held and should otherwise stand down from the Steering Group. These meetings shall be open to the general public.
- 4.9 Each Steering Group member shall have one vote and the Chairman of the meeting shall have the casting vote.
- 4.10 The quorum for Steering Group meetings will be one third of Steering Group members, with a minimum of five.
- 4.11 The Steering Group may co-opt additional members in any year to fill any vacancy that arises during the year. Co-opted members will have the same voting rights as other Steering Group members. The Steering Group may appoint any member as an officer should a vacancy arise during the year.
- 4.12 Minutes of Steering Group Meetings will be available to the members of the Forum within three weeks of the meeting.
- 4.13 Members, including Co-opted Members, should declare any conflict of interests which could be deemed to have an influence on decisions likely to come before the Steering Group. Members will abstain from voting on any matter in which they have a conflicting interest.
- 4.14 The Steering Group will liaise with relevant organisations which may have an interest in the Area but which are not eligible for membership of the Forum.
- 4.15 The Steering Group may set up Task or Working Groups for specific projects or tasks to be undertaken. Each Task or Working Group will include at least one member of the Steering Group.

5. Annual General Meeting

- 5.1 Annual General Meetings open to all members will be held in May of each year or as close to such month as practicable.
- 5.2 A notice of the meeting and details of any resolutions to be put to it will be sent to all Forum members at least 21 days before the meeting. Notices to members will be deemed delivered if sent to the member's last notified email address, or (where no email address is given) sent by post to the last notified address.
- 5.3 Each Annual General Meeting will:-

- 5.3.1 Include a Chairman's Report and the financial statements for the year.
- 5.3.2 Consider resolutions to alter the constitution and, if approved, sanction such changes.
- 5.3.3 Appoint the Steering Group. In the event of more than one individual wishing to be appointed to a post then an election shall take place.
- 5.3.4 Consider any issues that members wish to raise, provided at least two weeks' notice of any issue has been given to the Secretary prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting.
- 5.4 Each member present will have one vote.
- 5.5 Resolutions will be decided by simple majority vote, except for changes to the Constitution which shall be agreed by a two thirds majority.
- 5.6 The quorum for the Annual General Meeting shall be 21 members.

6. Extraordinary General Meeting

- 6.1 An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Forum may be called at any time by the Steering Group or within 28 days of a request for such a meeting being received by the Secretary signed by at least 21 members. Such a meeting may be called to:
 - 6.1.1 Consider and approve changes to the constitution
 - 6.1.2 Deal with any matter that the Steering Group wishes to put before the membership
 - 6.1.3 Deal with any issues the members requesting the meeting wish to put before the Steering Group.
- 6.2 Notice of the Extraordinary General Meeting shall be provided in the same way as for the Annual General Meeting.
- 6.3 Notices and procedure shall be the same as for the Annual General Meeting as appropriate.

7. Finance

- 7.1 The Forum will have the power to raise funds as necessary for its activities, by grant, donation or any other appropriate means.
- 7.2 The Forum will open one or more bank accounts as necessary. All funds raised for the Forum will be held in such accounts. If it is a requirement of grant funding that the funds should be held by an incorporated body, then the Forum will enter into an agreement with a suitable organisation. All financial transactions will require two signatories.
- 7.3 The financial year will run to the 31st March.
- 7.4 Subject to funding, the Steering Group may commission advisory services, surveys or any other activity in support of the Objectives.
- 7.5 No member of the Forum shall receive any remuneration but reasonable expenses incurred in undertaking the work of the Forum will be reimbursed.

- 7.6 The Treasurer will be responsible for maintaining the accounts of the Forum, for submitting returns and claims for funding, and for regular reporting of the Forum's finances to the Steering Group.
- 7.7 Officers and Members of the Forum shall not be liable for any loss suffered by the Forum as a result of their respective duties on its behalf, except such as arise from their own negligence.
- 7.8 The Forum will seek insurance cover, or other provision, through the Local Authority, or any independent institution to protect its members and officers from any action which may arise from the legitimate exercise of the functions of the Forum.
- 7.9 The accounts are to be audited annually in accordance with any relevant legislation.

8. General Policies and Principles

The Forum will:-

- 8.1 Encourage interested residents; local representative groups, organisations and societies; and businesses in the Area to become members of the Forum and to work alongside the Forum to further their joint objectives.
- 8.2 Operate respecting all differences including gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability and income.
- 8.3 Foster community spirit and encourage civic pride.
- 8.4 Take the distinctive character and heritage of Horsham into account in all its actions.
- 8.5 Generally support actions aimed at generating employment in the Area.
- 8.6 Support projects that are of benefit to the Area.
- 8.7 Consider proposals by public or private sector bodies likely to have a significant impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Area.
- 8.8 Promote sustainable development, environmental improvement and conservation.
- 8.9 Publicise and promote the work of the Forum
- 8.10 Work with groups of a similar nature and exchange information, advice and knowledge with them.
- 8.11 Take any form of action that is lawful which is necessary to achieve the Objectives, including entering into any contracts which it may see fit.

9. Neighbourhood Plan

- 9.1 The Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Development Plan ('NDP') will set out policies for the development and use of land within the Area. As provided for in the Act, the NDP will be subject to extensive consultation and examination, including a referendum as specified by the Act.
- 9.2 The NDP will be produced as far as possible in co-operation and co-ordination with adjoining parishes.
- 9.3 The NDP will complement the Horsham District Planning Framework and encourage all development to be sympathetic to the character of the Area.
- 9.4 The NDP will aim to:-

- 9.4.1 Identify locations for potential development that will include affordable housing, retail, business, leisure and community use;
 - 9.4.2 Express aspirations for the future development of traffic and transport serving or passing through the Area;
 - 9.4.3 Provide for the preservation and improvement of private and public open space;
 - 9.4.4 Nominate Assets of Community Value for listing by Horsham District Council;
 - 9.4.5 Pay due attention to sustainability and carbon reduction;
 - 9.4.6 Take account of the surface and underground water environment, flood and pollution risks and soil stability.
 - 9.4.7 Include policies which generate employment in the Area and promote business activity, particularly for small businesses, start-ups and home-working.
 - 9.4.8 Promote a diverse range of shops and services in the community with particular emphasis on encouraging smaller enterprises and retail in the secondary shopping areas.
- 9.5 The NDP will include any additional policies required to deliver the Objectives.

10. Dissolution

- 10.1 The Forum may be dissolved by decision of an Extraordinary General Meeting specifically called for this purpose.
- 10.2 In the event of dissolution, any unused grants should be returned to the granting organisation.
- 10.3 Any remaining property or funds held by the Forum will, subject to the agreement of the Members at the Extraordinary General Meeting, be allocated to one or more nominated organisations set up to continue the work of the Forum, or in the absence of any such organisation and subject to any statutory regulations, be donated to charities or organisations whose objects benefit local residents.

11. Duration

In accordance with the Act, a formal review of the functions and achievements of the Forum will be carried out five years after its formation. Following such review, and consultation with its members, the Forum will decide to continue, amend or dissolve itself as considered appropriate. Such decision will be tabled for the fifth Annual General Meeting.