

Appendix 4: Neighbourhood Forum Constitution

HESTERS WAY NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT FORUM

CONSTITUTION

1. Background

The Forum has been established to draw up and maintain a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Hesters Way in Cheltenham, using the powers in the Localism Act 2011.

2. Area covered by the Forum

The Area covered by the Forum is the council ward of Hesters Way defined by the attached map.

3. Aims & purposes of the Forum

The Forum shall:

- Draw up a **plan for the future development** of the area.
- Further the **social, economic, health, educational and environmental well-being** of Hesters Way Cheltenham.
- **Allocate sites for business, retail and housing development** including affordable housing.
- Plan for **public realm improvements** and **consider and recommend improvements** for the street environment in the area.
- Express aspirations for **transport, traffic and parking**.
- Ensure developments **mitigate against the effects of climate change**.
- Seek to **protect existing buildings/areas of note** and worth.
- Aim to **support local businesses, associations, organisations and employers**.
- Consider and **recommend improvements for the street environment** in the area.
- Seek to **protect and improve community resources** and facilities such as libraries, community centres and public facilities.
- Consider how to **protect green spaces** and bring environmental benefits to the area.
- **Involve as many residents**, local workers and local businesses in the process as possible.
- **Attract wide support** for the plan across the area, taking in a range of views.
- **Campaign to have the plan adopted** by relevant bodies and by referendum.
- Work **to maintain and update the plan** as necessary.
- Plan to **improve community safety**.

The Forum shall aim to be as inclusive as possible and shall not discriminate on the grounds of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

The Forum will be open to local councillors and other politicians who represent the area, but shall not be a party political body.

4. Membership

- Membership will be open to anyone who lives or works or has a business in the area defined in Article 2. Associate membership may be given to any interested local resident living or working outside the area.
- Individuals will become members of the Forum once they have given their contact details (including where possible an email address) to the Secretary or other officer.
- An up to date record of the membership shall be kept by the Secretary. It is the obligation of members to notify the secretary in writing of changes of circumstance that affect their membership rights.
- Members may resign from the Forum at any time in writing to the Secretary or verbally at a meeting.

- There shall be no group membership of the Forum. However, residents' associations and other local groups shall be encouraged to support and assist the work of the Forum.

5. Officers

- Members of the Forum shall elect by simple majority officers to carry out the business of the Forum. In order to stand for election as an officer, a candidate will need to be a member of the Forum. He/she will also need to be proposed and seconded by two other members of the Forum. Associate members of the Forum shall not be eligible for election.
- The officers of the Forum shall be:
 - A Chair - who shall chair the meetings.
 - A Vice-Chair– who shall provide support and assistance to the Chair.
 - A Secretary - who shall be responsible for the taking of minutes; keeping a record of members; and distribution of internal paperwork and emails.
 - A Treasurer - who shall be responsible for the Forum's bank accounts.
 - A Marketing and Communications officer – who shall be responsible for external paper/electronic circulars and a website.
- Any vacancies for these posts shall be filled by an election at a subsequent general meeting, provided at least 14 days' notice is given of the meeting and the election.
- Any officer who does not attend two consecutive meetings without apology will be deemed to have resigned effective from the second meeting.

6. General Meetings

- The Forum will hold general meetings open to all members.
- The Secretary shall ensure that notice of the date of all general meetings is given to all members (by email where possible) not less than 14 days before the meeting.
- The minutes of all general meetings shall be available (by email where possible) to all members and associate members, as well as those who have attended recent meetings. Minutes of each meeting shall be approved by the following meeting.
- The quorum for all general meetings shall be 8 members including Chair or Vice-Chair and one other officer.
- In the event of a general meeting failing to achieve a quorum, business may be discussed and proposals put to the next meeting for ratification. In the event of two consecutive ordinary meetings being inquorate, the second meeting may call a Special General Meeting. Such a Special General Meeting will be deemed to be quorate.
- A general meeting may decide, by majority vote, to establish a steering committee to lead the day-to-day running of the Forum. A general meeting may also, by majority vote, decide to establish sub-committees and working groups to work on specific areas to be covered by the Plan. All committees and working groups shall report on their work to general meetings.

7. Special General Meetings

- The Chair, the Vice-Chair or the Secretary may at any time call a Special General Meeting of the Forum, either for the purpose of altering the Constitution, or for considering any matters which the officers may decide should be specially referred to members.
- A Special General Meeting may also be called at the written request to the Secretary of not less than 5 members, who must give reasons for their request. Any matters notified to the Secretary 14 days before the Special General Meeting shall be discussed at the meeting.
- The Secretary shall give at least 14 days' notice to members of a Special General Meeting called in the circumstances set out in Article 6(v) above.

8. Voting

- Voting at all meetings shall be by a show of hands of members, unless otherwise resolved. Each member present shall have one vote. Votes are not transferable. Associate members shall not have a vote, unless otherwise resolved.
- A simple majority of votes shall prevail, except where otherwise provided in these rules. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.
- Any member or associate member with a conflict of interest on an issue being discussed at a meeting shall declare it. A conflict of interest is any situation in which a member or associate member's personal interests, or duties which they owe to another body, and those of the Forum arise simultaneously or appear to clash.
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- Proxy voting is not accepted.

9. Financial Records & Funding

- The Treasurer shall open a bank account in the name of the Forum. The account shall have at least three signatories. Any payments over £500 need to be agreed by the Forum, authorised by two signatories and countersigned by a third signatory. All other payments need to be authorized by at least two of the signatories, and counter-signed by a third.
- The Treasurer shall keep proper financial records and produce annual accounts, which will be presented at appropriate meetings.
- The Forum shall seek to raise money from individuals and local groups. This shall pay for the running costs of the Forum, such as administration, printing and room hire.
- Where appropriate, the Forum may apply for grants and donations from public authorities, charities and other organisations.
- The Forum may also seek funds and sponsorship from local businesses. However, in order to avoid any conflict of interest, all donations/gifts of more than £100 will need to be approved by a majority vote at a general meeting of the Forum.
- All money raised by the Forum shall be spent for the purposes laid out in the Aims of the Forum (Article 3).

10. Changes to the Constitution

- The Constitution may be altered at a Special General Meeting.

- Any proposed changes must be given to the Secretary at least 21 days before the meeting. Any proposed changes must be circulated to all members at least 14 days before a Special General Meeting where they will be discussed. Any proposed changes must be circulated on paper to all members present at the meeting where they are being discussed.
- Changes to the Constitution must be agreed by at least two-thirds of members present.

11. Dissolution

- If a meeting by simple majority decides that it is necessary or appropriate to close down the Forum, a Special General Meeting shall be called by the Secretary to consider whether or not to do so.
- The Forum may only be dissolved at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose. All members must be notified of such a meeting at least 21 days before it takes place.
- Upon dissolution, funds and possessions held by the Forum will be disposed of according to
 - (a) the wishes of the meeting and
 - (b) in so far as not disposed of under (a), for any of the aims and purposes set out in Article 3.

(This Constitution was readopted as the Constitution of the Hesters Neighbourhood Forum at a meeting held on 1st Feb 2023).