

SECTION 4

East Boldon Neighbourhood Forum Constitution

Name

The name of the Forum shall be the East Boldon Neighbourhood Forum (the Forum).

Area of Benefit

The area in which the Forum will pursue its objectives is the East Boldon Neighbourhood Area, which is the area designated by South Tyneside Council for which the Forum will produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

Objectives

The purpose of the East Boldon Neighbourhood Forum is:

- To prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the East Boldon Neighbourhood Area from inception through to formal adoption;
- To promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the East Boldon Neighbourhood Area for the benefit of the community as a whole;
- To represent the majority view of the local population of the East Boldon Neighbourhood Area, reflected through engagement with all parts of the community;
- To see those views incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan to guide development in the area;
- To support development:
 - 1) Which responds to the needs and wishes of the local community.
 - 2) Enhances and respects the character of the village.
 - 3) Is sensitive to the environment and its impact on nature.
 - 4) Which is sustainable, takes account of existing infrastructure and is sensitive to the pace of development on the village.

Powers

In furtherance of its objectives the East Boldon Neighbourhood Forum may:

- Invite and receive contributions and raise funds where appropriate, to finance the work of the Forum, and to open a bank account to manage such funds;
- Publicise and promote the work of the Forum and organise meetings, training courses, events or seminars 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 including in particular South Tyneside Council and any other Neighbourhood Forum or similar organisation representing the communities immediately abutting the boundaries of the East Boldon Neighbourhood Area;
- Employ staff, professional consultants and volunteers as are necessary to conduct activities to meet the objectives of the Forum;

- Take any form of action that is lawful, which is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Forum, including taking out any contracts which it may see fit.

Membership

The East Boldon Neighbourhood Forum will comprise at least 21 individuals who live or work in the East Boldon Neighbourhood Area or who are elected members of South Tyneside Council for the ward which falls within the East Boldon Neighbourhood Area.

Membership is open to individuals who live or work in the East Boldon Neighbourhood Area. It is also open to individuals who are elected members of South Tyneside Council for the ward of Cleadon and East Boldon.

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

Membership shall be drawn from different parts of the East Boldon Neighbourhood Area and different sections of the community in the East Boldon Neighbourhood Area.

The minimum age for membership is 16 years old

Members shall be accepted by the Forum; resignations from membership shall be received by the Forum.

Applications for membership shall be made in writing (or such other method prescribed by the Forum from time to time) to the Secretary. Applicants must:

- i. state which group the applicant belongs to;
- ii. declare any financial, party political, employment, land ownership or other interest that could have an impact on the work of the Forum

Any member may resign his or her membership by notifying the Secretary in writing.

Once the initial membership has been established additional members may be admitted to the Forum at any time with the agreement of the Forum.

Members have a duty and are required to declare in advance any financial, party political, employment, land ownership or other interest that has a bearing on the work of the Forum in general or on an agenda item in particular. Declarations of interest shall be made to the Secretary who shall maintain a register of member's interests.

Working Arrangements

Meetings

a) General Meetings and Annual General Meeting

- An annual general meeting (AGM) will be held at the beginning of each calendar year. The AGM will elect officers of the Forum and other members of the executive Committee. The quorum for the AGM shall be 15 or 1/3 of the membership, whichever is the fewest.
- The Forum will have general meetings of all forum members as and when necessary and in any case will meet each quarter including the AGM.
- A quorum for general meetings of the Forum will consist of at least 12 members or 1/3 of the membership of the Forum (whichever is the fewest).
- Forum members must be notified at least seven days in advance of a meeting.

b) Executive Committee and Officers of the Forum

- An Executive Committee will be elected at the AGM meeting of the Forum each year.
- The AGM will elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Minute Secretary, Treasurer and three other members. These Officers will comprise the Executive Committee. Their roles, where applicable, is set out below (see Officer's Roles and Responsibilities).
- The Executive Committee will meet as and when necessary.
- The quorum for an Executive Committee meeting will be at least three members which must include at least one of the officers.
- The majority of Executive Committee members shall be residents of the area.
- The Executive Committee will be responsible for the running of the Forum and may prepare funding bids and take decisions about the use of any resources the Forum has.
- The Executive Committee may undertake work on the development of the Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of the Forum – subject to “Neighbourhood Planning” below.
- Any member of the Forum may attend committee meetings to observe and may inspect any papers or minutes of committee meetings.
- The Committee will be responsible for opening and managing a bank account to handle any financial resources the Forum may have.

c) Working Groups

Either the Forum or the Executive Committee may set up Working Groups as necessary to carry out specific pieces of work. The membership of Working Groups will be drawn from the membership of the Forum.

Decision Making

Decisions will be made by a simple majority of those present. Voting will be by show of hands (excluding the person chairing the meeting) and in the event of a tied vote the person chairing the meeting will have the casting vote. No decisions may be made unless the meeting is quorate.

Non-Members

Non-members may be invited to meetings of the Forum, Committee or Working Groups and with the permission of the Chair may speak and take part in discussions. Non-members will not be eligible to vote on any decisions made at meetings they attend.

Neighbourhood Planning

The Committee or a Working Group may carry out work on developing a Neighbourhood Plan or Development Order but any decision to undertake, consult on or submit a draft Neighbourhood Plan, or Development Order to the local authority for validation, examination, referendum or adoption must be taken at a general meeting of the Forum.

Complaints

Any complaint about the behaviour of a member of the Neighbourhood Forum shall be made in writing to the Chair. The Chair and the Secretary will investigate the complaint and decide on action as appropriate. If the complaint concerns the Chair or Secretary then other members of the Forum will be appointed to investigate in their place by vote. If a member acts in a way that the Committee considers to be prejudicial to the best interests of the Forum or the residents / businesses of the area then the Committee may revoke their membership on the basis of a vote.

Officers Roles and Responsibilities

The AGM will elect the following officers from amongst the membership of the Forum:

Chair:

The Chair will:

- Call and Chair meetings of the Forum and the Committee
- Be responsible for interpreting this constitution and ensuring that all meetings and business are conducted in accordance with the constitution.
- Be a signatory for the Forum's bank account.

Vice Chair:

The Vice Chair will:

- Assist the Chair in their duties
- Deputise for the Chair in their absence
- Be a signatory for the Forum's bank account

Secretary:

The Secretary will:

- Make the necessary arrangements for meetings
- Maintain copies of any papers and minutes and make them available for inspection by members on request
- Arrange for minutes of Forum and Committee meetings to be taken
- Be a signatory for the Forum's bank account
- Maintain a list of members of the Forum and their contact details
- Maintain a register of Members Interests

Assistant Secretary:

The Assistant Secretary will:

- Assist the Secretary in their duties
- Deputise for the Secretary in their absence
- Be a signatory for the Forum's bank account

Treasurer:

The Treasurer will:

- Manage the Forum's finances and bank account
- Keep accounts which will be presented to a General Meeting of the Forum each year
- Be a signatory for the Forum's bank account

Minute Secretary:

The Minute Secretary will:

- Oversee the recording of minutes in a timely fashion and send to the Secretary for onward distribution and storage.

Finances

- The Executive Committee will make arrangements to open a bank account in order to deposit and draw on any funds that might be made available for the use of the Forum.
- Any cheques must be signed by at least two signatories who are not related and who do not reside at the same address.
- Any decisions to spend money belonging to the Forum must be made by formal agreement of the Executive Committee and recorded in the minutes.
- Accounts will be reported to the AGM of the Forum each year.

Alteration to the Constitution

The constitution may be altered by resolution of the majority of members present and voting at the AGM of the Forum.

Election of Officers in the Event of Resignation

Where it is necessary to elect a replacement officer or member of the Executive Committee then this shall be carried out by a normal general meeting of the Forum so long as it is quorate.

Duration

The duration of the East Boldon Neighbourhood Forum is 5 years from its formal designation by South Tyneside Council. Before the expiration of its 5 year life, it will give consideration to establishing a continuing or successor organisation to maintain and monitor the East Boldon Neighbourhood Plan.

If the Forum is dissolved and no successor organisation established, any remaining funds after all bills and charges have been settled will be gifted to East Boldon Scouts.