

# Kirkstall Neighbourhood Forum – Written Constitution

## **1.0 Name and Area**

1.1 The name of the Forum shall be the Kirkstall Neighbourhood Forum.

1.2 The area covered by the Forum shall be the area as shown on the attached map, known as the Kirkstall Neighbourhood 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 the Kirkstall Neighbourhood Area;

b) Undertake the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Kirkstall from inception through to adoption of the Plan;

c) Identify ways, in consultation with relevant authorities and organisations, of involving the whole community in the preparation of the Plan and gathering, analysing and presenting their views and opinions to ensure the Plan is as comprehensive and inclusive as possible;

d) Work in partnership with Leeds City Council in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan;

e) Work closely with other supporting organisations, including the voluntary sector, to ensure they play a key role in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan;

f) Take responsibility for planning, budgeting and monitoring expenditure on the production of the Neighbourhood Plan and associated projects, including identifying possible sources of funding;

g) Ensure the Kirkstall Neighbourhood Plan conforms with local and national planning policies;

h) Ensure the Forum shall not be affiliated to any political party or organisation;

i) Continue working for an improved Kirkstall and continue the Forum as deemed necessary beyond the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **3.0 Powers**

3.1 In pursuance of these aims and objectives, the Neighbourhood Forum will:

a) Produce a Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of the community within the designated boundary referred to in Section 1.2;

b) Maintain a Neighbourhood Forum website giving details of the Forum, including a map of the Kirkstall Neighbourhood Area, the contact details of the Chair and Secretary, this Constitution and policies agreed by the Forum, notices, agendas and minutes of meetings;

c) 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;

d) Raise money or apply for funding as necessary;

e) Employ paid staff or recruit volunteers;

- f) Buy or rent premises/equipment/employ services as required;
- g) Conduct research;
- h) Carry out anything else within the law necessary to reach the Forum's aims and objectives.

#### **4.0 Values**

4.1 The Forum and its Board 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 will comply with all relevant equality and anti-discrimination legislation and shall not discriminate against any persons on grounds of race, nationality, gender, sexuality, religion, or age.

#### **5.0 Annual General Meetings (AGM)**

5.1 The first AGM will be held once the Forum has been officially designated. Information on elections to the Board (including how to stand) will be sent out to Forum members prior to the AGM, along with an agenda. Future AGM's will be held within six months of the designated end of the financial year and will be called with at least 14 days notice.

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 Board of no fewer than 7 and no more than 12 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.

#### **6.0 The Board**

6.1 A Board 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 Board will comprise no fewer than 7 and no more than 12 members, the majority of whom will be members of the Forum and be resident in the Neighbourhood Area.

6.3 The Board will appoint a Forum Chair, Secretary and Treasurer at its first meeting and thereafter at its first meeting after every AGM.

6.4 The Board may co-opt up to 3 additional members who will retire at each AGM.

6.5 The quorum for any Board meeting shall be at least 50% of the Board.

6.6 Notification of Board meetings and the agenda will be sent out at least 14 days before the date of the meeting to all Board members.

6.7 The Board may dismiss any Board member at a Board meeting at which this is an agenda item if two thirds of Board members present vote to do so.

6.8 Any Board member absent for three consecutive meetings will be deemed to be dismissed (even if apologies are given) and the next Board meeting will be informed of any dismissal.

## **7.0 Rules at Meetings**

7.1 The following rules apply to all meetings, including Open Meetings, Board 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 at Board meetings in order to carry out a vote is laid out in paragraph 6.5. There is no quorum for Open Meetings or the AGM.

## **8.0 Membership**

8.1 Membership of the Forum shall be open to all residents living in the area, all those who work or carry out business in the area, and elected members for the area.

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

8.3 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. Applicants under this category must specify the body or group they represent, the nature of its work within the Kirkstall Neighbourhood Area and the individual's role with that body or group.

8.4 Members must be over 16 years of age, can attend Forum meetings and are eligible to vote on proposals put forward by the Forum.

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

a) Individuals who live in the Kirkstall Neighbourhood Area Boundary;

b) Individuals who work in the Kirkstall Neighbourhood Area Boundary (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise);

c) Individuals who are elected members of the City Council whose area falls within the Kirkstall Neighbourhood Area Boundary.

8.6 The initial list of members will be tabled at a founding Open Meeting of the Forum and deemed accepted if a majority of those voting at the meeting approve them.

8.7 Subsequent applications for membership will be tabled at any Open Meeting of the Forum and deemed accepted if approved by a simple majority of members present.

8.8 All members of the Forum have a duty to declare at application stage any financial interests or associations through party political or other organisations, employment or land ownership 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 members present vote in favour of termination.

8.10 Any 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 members

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

8.12 Non membership is open to individuals who do not meet the requirements in 8.1, but have an interest in assisting the Forum to achieve its aims and objectives.

8.13 There are no age restrictions on non-membership.

## **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, without exception, be authorised by at least two of the following three Board members – the Treasurer, Chair and Secretary.

## **10.0 Complaints**

10.1 Any complaints about the behaviour of a member of the Forum or sub-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 Board 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 SGM 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 Special 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 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 members.

### **13.0 *Extending life of Forum***

13.1 The Forum is designated for a period of five years. However, the Forum can apply to have the designation renewed.