



Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Group Constitution

Issue 1

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Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Group Constitution

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Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Group Constitution

1. Name and Neighbourhood Area

1.1 The name of the Group shall be 'Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Group' hereinafter referred to as 'the Group'.

1.2 The neighbourhood area shall be defined by the Group and agreed with Wilmslow Town Council and Cheshire East Borough Council under their statutory powers and hereinafter referred to as 'the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Area'.

2. Definitions

2.1 The term 'Neighbourhood Plan' refers to a 'Neighbourhood Development Plan', as referenced by the Localism Act 2011.

2.2 The 'Qualifying Body' (as defined by the Act) is Wilmslow Town Council.

2.3 The Group is an unincorporated association governed by this constitution.

3. Objectives

3.1 To create and promote a vision and plan for improvement in the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Area for the period 2016-2030.

3.2 To prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for adoption by Wilmslow Town Council.

3.3 To liaise with Cheshire East Council and to secure its support under the Council's statutory powers.

3.4 To establish all necessary sub groups and co-opt expertise to enable completion of the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.5 To promote and encourage full involvement of the community in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4. Group Membership

4.1 All members of the Group shall participate as volunteers.

4.2 Membership of the Group shall be open and transparent.

4.3 The Group shall strive to be inclusive and not to discriminate on the grounds of gender, ethnicity or national origin, sexuality, disability, religious or political belief, marital status, age or socio-economic background.

4.4 Upon adoption of this constitution new members may join by applying to the Group Chair or Secretary.

4.5 The decision to accept an application for membership is the responsibility of the Group and shall be made on the recommendation of the Officers. Any refusal to accept an application for membership must be notified to the applicant, along with a

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full and valid reason for rejection. Officers must take all reasonable measures to include all volunteer members in the process and, if unable to accommodate membership to the Group, the Officers should seek to identify other suitable roles within the Neighbourhood Plan process.

4.6 A list of members' names (but importantly **not** their contact details) shall be open to inspection by the public.

4.7 Lists of members with their contact details are the sole ownership of the Group subject to any statutory requirements relating to the release of and access to this information.

4.8 Members may be excluded from the Group. Any exclusion shall be made by the Group following a recommendation by the Officers. Such individuals must be given reasons in writing for the proposed exclusion prior to any vote being taken.

5. Group composition, roles and responsibilities

5.1 Members of the Group shall either live and/or work in the Neighbourhood Area. Elected members of Wilmslow Town Council may be members of the Group but they do so purely as volunteers. In this capacity they shall have the same powers and voting rights as other members of the Group.

5.2 In addition, up to three other elected members of Wilmslow Town Council may attend meetings of the Group as observers. They must then declare that they are present in their capacity as Councillors and they shall not be allowed to vote.

5.3 The Group shall include the following officials, hereinafter referred to as 'the Officers': Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Publicity Officer, Engagement Officer and Document Control Officer. Officers shall be elected by simple majority vote of Group members.

5.4 Collectively, the Officers shall constitute the 'Management Committee' who shall facilitate the smooth and efficient running of the Group's activities and set priorities. The Management Committee may co-opt up to two further Group members to assist in carrying out their duties.

5.5 The Chair shall be the principal presiding officer and shall chair all meetings of the Group when present and shall be responsible for ensuring that the constitution is upheld.

5.6 The Chair shall be given the opportunity of an additional casting vote on occasions when voting is tied.

5.7 The Chair shall lead the Group in all communication and business with external organisations and individuals, Wilmslow Town Council and Cheshire East Council, and shall act as the Group's spokesperson.

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5.8 The Chair shall have the power to take urgent interim decisions between meetings of the Group. These decisions shall then be reviewed at the next meeting of the Group.

5.9 The Chair, with the assistance of the Management Committee, shall agree a schedule of delegated powers to enable the Officers and designated sub-group leaders to perform their separate functions efficiently, and the Chair shall present this schedule, and any proposed changes to the schedule, to a meeting of the Group for approval before implementation.

5.10 The Vice-Chair shall be selected by the Management Committee from the ranks of those elected as Officers by simple majority vote.

5.11 The Vice-Chair shall stand in for the Chair in their absence, with all the duties, powers and responsibilities of the Chair as listed above.

5.12 The Secretary shall be responsible for circulating agendas, including essential agenda-related documents and for the taking and circulation of 'action minutes' of meetings. In addition the Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining a schedule of group members' names and contact details.

5.13 The Treasurer shall be responsible for financial control, for maintaining all budgeting records and for monitoring expenditure made on behalf of the Group. The Treasurer shall regularly brief the Group on all financial matters and shall issue quarterly reports to a full meeting of the Group. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the publication of statements of accounts as required.

5.14 The Group's funds shall be held and administered by a designated person acting on behalf of Wilmslow Town Council. The Treasurer for the Group shall liaise with this person and shall ensure that all expenditure made on behalf of the Group is properly authorised, and that payment of all disbursements satisfy the terms agreed. Any single expenditure greater than £200 (two hundred pounds) shall require two signatures, at least one of which must be that of the Treasurer or the Chair. A third signatory shall be nominated from among the Officers to deputise in the absence of either the Chair or the Treasurer.

5.15 The Publicity Officer shall be responsible for promotion and publicity of the objectives of the Group, and for disseminating the findings and recommendations of the Group once sanctioned by the Chair

5.16 The Engagement Officer shall be responsible for developing active discussion and community links with the Group by involving established volunteer groupings that represent local Churches, schools, businesses, environmental concerns and the like. The Engagement Officer shall be responsible for community consultation on behalf of the Group and shall assist the Chair in his/her communication with external bodies and individuals.

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5.17 The Document Control Officer shall be responsible for maintaining a library and archive of all controlled documents. Controlled documents are those that are key for the activities of the Group e.g. action minutes, consultations, formal reports etc. and essential for the development and production of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Document Control Officer shall also be the contact for access to all controlled documents.

5.18 The Group may engage with other bodies to exchange information, advice and knowledge including private sector business, public sector bodies and other organisations e.g. voluntary bodies, charities, land and property owners and other relevant groups.

6. Affiliations and Independence

6.1 The Group shall be apolitical.

6.2 All members of the Group shall act in the best interests of the Group and the Neighbourhood Area. They shall follow the good governance guidelines set out in the attached guidance (and any subsequent updates):

<http://www.goodgovernancecode.org.uk>.

6.3 All members shall consider and respect the views of others during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

7. Declarations of Interest

7.1 All Group members must declare the nature and extent of any interest, direct or indirect, which they may have in a proposed transaction or arrangement with the Group, or in any transaction or arrangement entered into by the Group which has not been previously declared.

7.2 Members must absent themselves from any discussions of the Group in which it is possible that a conflict shall arise between his or her duty to act solely in the interests of the Group and any personal interest (including but not limited to any personal financial interest). Any Group member absenting themselves from any discussions in accordance with this clause must not vote or be counted as part of the quorum in any decision of the Group on the matter.

8. Group Meetings

8.1 Group meetings shall be open for members of the public (but not public meetings). All meetings shall have a timed agenda item to allow for public contributions.

8.2 The venue(s) for meetings of the Group, or any sub group, shall be decided by the Group Chair /Secretary or by the leader of a sub group.

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8.3 The Officers shall call meetings of the Group as appear necessary, giving at least 48 hours written notice (e-mail is acceptable) together with the agenda, any supporting documents and venue.

8.4 At least 4 members (two of whom must be officers) shall be present at the start of a Group meeting for it to be declared quorate.

8.5 The Group meeting shall receive and comment on reports from the Officers and sub groups and agree future actions.

8.6 The Group meeting shall appoint and dissolve sub groups as required.

8.7 The Group meeting shall authorise all recommendations to be made to Wilmslow Town Council and Cheshire East Borough Council.

8.8 The Group shall adopt any constitutional amendments that are agreed at a Group meeting, provided due notice has been given for the proposed amendments in accordance with Clause 12.2 and provided that the vote has been carried.

9. Sub groups

9.1 Sub groups as appointed by the Group shall work under a designated leader selected by the Chair.

9.2 The designated leader of the sub group may recruit other members of the group or other individuals to complete their designated task.

9.3 A sub group meeting may be called at short notice by the designated leader of the sub group.

10. Decision Making and Conflict Resolution

10.1 At all times the Group shall recognise the primary need to encourage community involvement in, and support for, the Neighbourhood Plan. If the Group cannot agree during any stage of the Plan preparation, every effort shall be made by the members of the Group to resolve any differences by negotiation and simple majority vote. Where this does not resolve the situation, the Chair shall have an additional casting vote.

10.2 Voting shall be allowed *in absentia* provided written (e-mail shall be accepted) confirmation of the vote is received by the Chair/Secretary 24 hr. prior to commencement of the meeting.

11. Confidentiality

11.1 It is understood, and agreed, that the Group members may from time-to-time receive information of a confidential nature, and that the Group and its individual members shall respect the protection of such information and preserve its confidentiality.

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11.2 It is agreed that any recipient shall limit the disclosure of Confidential Information to members of the Group that have a need to know. Group members shall not disclose the confidential information obtained from the disclosure unless required to do so by law.

12. Constitution Amendments

12.1 This Constitution shall become effective upon approval by the Group.

12.2 This Constitution may only be amended at a meeting of the Group by a simple majority vote of the members. Proposed amendments must be submitted in writing, and seconded, and the proposed amendment must be included in the notice of the meeting at which it shall be considered. (see also **8.8**)

13. Dissolution

13.1 The Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Group shall be dissolved if a motion to that effect is circulated in the notice of a meeting of the Group and is carried by the members in a simple majority vote at an Extraordinary General Meeting.

13.2 Any assets or remaining funds after debts have been paid shall be transferred to Wilmslow Town Council.

14. Communications

14.1 The Management Committee shall establish protocols for incoming communications to the Group.

Issue :
Signed :
Date :
Name :
Position :