



KNOWLE, DORRIDGE AND BENTLEY HEATH

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM - CONSTITUTION

1. Introduction

This is the Constitution of the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH) Neighbourhood Forum (hereafter referred to as the Forum).

It also acts as a Scheme of Delegation from Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Plan Ltd (hereafter referred to as the Company), the legal entity through which any commercial activity of the Forum is transacted.

The Forum is established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Area.

The Forum shall be an arm of the Company with delegated objectives of:

- i) Preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Neighbourhood Area.
- ii) Encouraging goodwill, promoting and supporting the involvement of the wider community.
- iii) Fostering, mobilising and engaging community spirit and encouraging civic pride.

The Forum shall exist for a period of up to five years from its formal designation by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC).

2a. Forum Steering Committee

The Steering Committee (SC) exists to co-ordinate, implement and monitor the work of the Forum, including development of a Neighbourhood Plan for KDBH. It will prioritise, schedule and publicise the work of the Forum.

The Directors of the Company, appointed by the Forum Members at the Company AGM, will also be members of the Steering Committee. There will be such further members of the Steering Committee as the Directors may appoint. Non-voting attendees with specialist skills may be co-opted onto the SC.

The SC may further delegate specific projects or tasks to Focus or Working Groups of Forum Members that it establishes and that will report back to it.

The SC will liaise as may be appropriate with relevant bodies such as the schools, medical centres, sports clubs, community associations, business associations, the local authority, police and the elected representatives for Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath.

SC decision making can be by consensus or after a vote – the Chair will have the casting vote where necessary.

The Steering Committee has the power to hold votes of no confidence in any member by simple majority vote.



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2b. Steering Committee Powers

In fulfilling the purposes of the Company, the Steering Committee has the power to: -

- i. Co-operate, support and work with other groups with similar purposes by exchanging information, advice and knowledge, including cooperation with other voluntary bodies, charities, statutory and non-statutory organisations.
- ii. Promote sustainable development, environmental improvement and conservation.
- iii. Publicise and promote the work of the Forum and organise a programme of community engagement, to include meetings, training courses, public events, seminars etc.
- iv. Employ such staff, consultants and other freelance personnel (who shall not be members of the Steering Committee) as are necessary to conduct activities to meet the objectives.
- v. Promote the health, social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the residents of the area by working together with all people irrespective of age, sex, ethnicity, ability, religion or political affiliation.
- vi. Do anything else within the law and within its delegated powers that is necessary to achieve the objectives.

3. Membership

Membership of the Forum shall be open to anyone who is resident in, works in or is an elected member of the Council representing the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Area. At all times the Forum will comprise at least 21 individuals who meet these criteria. Membership shall be invited from anyone who thus qualifies and wishes to actively commit themselves to the realisation of the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Plan. Members of the Forum shall also be Members of the Company.

4. General Meetings

The Forum shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year on the same date as the Company AGM. An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called at any other time at the written request of at least ten Members, and must be called within three (3) weeks of the receipt of such a request.

Each AGM or EGM of the Forum will be called with at least fourteen (14) working days' notice by giving written notice to all Members and by informing all residential properties within the agreed Neighbourhood Plan Boundary, through a best endeavours approach of publishing in local newspapers, posting on the Forum website, and utilising community groups' email distribution lists.

The notice for each AGM or EGM of the Forum shall specify the time and place of the meeting, the nature of the business to be transacted and any resolutions that are to be proposed.

The quorum and arrangements for conducting a General Meeting of the Forum will be as those for General Meetings of the Company and set out in its Articles of Association. Only registered members will be entitled to vote.



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All registered members are entitled to vote on resolutions at a general Meeting of the Forum. Voting shall be made by a show of hands on a majority basis. In the case of a tied vote, the chair of the meeting shall make the final decision.

5. Public Meetings

Holding public meetings gives legitimacy to the Forum and to the plans that they, or their Focus or Working Groups, may develop. The Forum shall hold public meetings as may be necessary to engage the public and give clear direction to the Forum's work.

A public meeting may be held at the same time as the AGM each year, or any other General Meeting, with the public able to participate after the completion of formal Company and Forum business.

Only full members of the Forum may stand for the Steering Committee and should be nominated by a Member or Associate Member.

7. Steering Committee Meetings

The SC shall meet at least four times a year. Meetings shall enable the group to discuss actions and monitor progress to date, and to consider future actions.

SC members shall be given at least fourteen (14) days' notice of when and where a meeting is due to take place, unless it is deemed as an emergency. Dates of SC meetings shall also be publicised on the Forum's website.

At least five (5) members of the SC must be present in order for a meeting to be quorate.

The Chair of the Board of Directors shall chair the SC meetings. In the absence of the Chair, the SC Members shall appoint one of those present to chair the meeting. All meetings shall be minuted and the minutes made accessible to the public and published on the Forum's website.

8. Finance

Any money acquired by the Forum, including donations, contributions and bequests, shall be paid into a bank account operated by the Steering Committee in the name of the Forum. All funds shall be applied to the furtherance of the objects of the Group and for no other purpose.

Any deeds, legal documents and/or cheques etc. relating to the Forum shall be signed by at least two (2) of the following Steering Committee members: Chairperson; Vice Chair, Treasurer; Company Secretary. All four signatories must be informed of the cheque disbursement prior to its issue. In most cases, it is expected that there will have been prior discussion of the disbursement at a meeting of the Forum.



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Financial monitoring and reporting shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer, who will be accountable for maintaining records of income and expenditure. Official accounts shall be maintained, and will be examined annually by an independent accountant who is not a member of the Group. The Treasurer will present an annual financial report to the membership at the AGM and intermittent reports to the Steering Committee upon request, in order to ensure funds are utilised effectively and that the Group stays within budget. The accounting year of the Forum shall run from 01 April to 31 March.

9. A Neighbourhood Plan – the Process

Any decision to proceed to the ‘Pre-Submission Consultation’ or ‘Submission to the Local Authority’ stages with a draft of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan shall be subject to approval of a resolution at a General Meeting.

Consultation on a Neighbourhood Plan will be open to people who live, work or carry out business in the Neighbourhood Area, as well as other identified relevant stakeholders, whether members of the Forum or not.

The Forum shall set up a website to publicise all stages of the Neighbourhood Planning process, to promote planned engagement of the community, to seek the views of the public and to publish the results of community consultation.

Key stages of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process, as defined in the Forum’s Project Plan, shall be subject to a full General Meeting of the Forum to facilitate consideration and discussion by the full membership.

The SC may delegate work with the local planning authority and any independent experts and advisors on the Neighbourhood Plan to a ‘Neighbourhood Plan Working Group’.

The SC may delegate the task of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan to a ‘Neighbourhood Plan Working Group’.

10. Alteration of this Document

This document may be amended by a resolution at a General Meeting of the Company by a two thirds majority of Members present and voting.

This Constitution and Scheme of Delegation was adopted at an inaugural meeting of Members held on 06 July 2015 by the following persons:

Name Jane Aykroyd _____
(Chair)

Name Dave Wallis _____
(Treasurer)

Name Bryan Hunt _____
(Lead, Neighbourhood Plan and Council Liaison)