

BOSCOMBE and POKESDOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FORUM'S CONSTITUTION

Name of Organisation:

Boscombe and Pokesdown Neighbourhood Plan Forum, hereafter in this document referred to as the "Forum".

Area:

The electoral wards of Boscombe East and Boscombe West, hereafter in this document referred to as the "area."

Duration:

The Forum shall exist for 5 years from its formal designation by Bournemouth Borough Council and at its AGM at the end of year 4, the AGM will give considerations to a continuing or successor organisation to maintain and monitor the Boscombe and Pokesdown Neighbourhood Plan.

The Aim of the Forum is to:

- (a) Improve social, economic and environmental conditions in the area, particularly through the preparation and implementation of a Neighbourhood Plan.
- (b) Produce a Neighbourhood Plan to further the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of the area.
- (c) Improve the neighbourhood area as an attractive, enjoyable and safe place for residents, workers and visitors of all ages.
- (d) Encourage and promote civic pride, positive perceptions, goodwill, involvement and cohesion in our diverse community.
- (e) Celebrate and support the cultural diversity of the area and promote an inclusive community.
- (f) Focus on the following aspects:
 - (i) To protect, preserve and promote the history and heritage of the area.
 - (ii) To encourage and promote the area as a place of tourism, business, commerce and creativity.
 - (iii) To provide the necessary social infrastructure and community facilities for the area.
 - (iv) To promote a positive image of Boscombe.
 - (v) To encourage more families into the area and provide a family friendly environment.
 - (vi) To promote the health and wellbeing of all residents of the area.
 - (vii) To promote environmental improvement and conservation by educating, encouraging and assisting the local population in environmental practice, working in partnership with similar groups and organisations.

Powers:

In furtherance of the objects, but not otherwise, the Forum may exercise the power to:

1. 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.
2. Publicise and promote the work of the Forum and organise meetings, training courses, events or seminars etc.
3. 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.
4. Employ paid staff (who shall **not** be members of the Working Group) and volunteers, and to take out any contracts, which it may seem fit as are necessary to meet the objects of the Forum with appropriate transparency and scrutiny by all.

5. Take any form of action that is lawful, which is necessary to achieve the objects of the Forum.

Membership:

1. The membership of the Forum is open to:
 - Individuals who live in the area
 - Individuals who work in the area
 - Individuals who are elected members of the area
2. The Forum must have a minimum membership of 21 individuals, each of whom either:
 - (i) Lives in the area
 - (ii) Works in the area
 - (iii) Is an elected member of the area
3. The Forum must have a minimum of one member from each of the three categories in 1 and 2 above under the heading “membership”.
4. The Forum will be as representative as possible of the people who live or work in the area. Thus membership will be drawn from different places in the area and from different sections of the community.
5. Membership will begin as soon as the membership form has been received.
6. A list of members will be kept by the Membership Secretary
7. Ceasing to be a Member:
 - (i) Members may resign at any time in writing to the Secretary
 - (ii) Offensive behaviour and inflammatory remarks racist, sexist, homophobic, disphobic (prejudice against people with disabilities, learning/physical/mental) and transphobic kinds or inflammatory remarks, will not be permitted. Anyone behaving in an offensive way or breaking the Equal Opportunities Policy may be asked not to attend further meetings or to resign from the group if an apology is not given or the behaviour is repeated. The individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Working Group, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.
8. Membership must be renewed annually by email, post or at the AGM.

Equal Opportunities:

The Forum will have a zero tolerance policy regarding discrimination on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, political belief, marital/civil partnership or age. The Forum is enthusiastically committed to supporting protected characteristics communities in its area, and to furthering opportunities for their involvement in the social, cultural and economic development of the area, and will reflect this in its activities and planning considerations.

Forum Working Group:

The business of the Forum will be managed by the Working Group.

- (i) The **membership** of the Working Group will be as follows:
 - Chairperson
 - Vice Chairperson
 - Secretary
 - Membership Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Conveners of the Sub-Working Groups
- (ii) The officers of the Working Group (Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, Membership Secretary and Treasurer) will be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Forum.
- (iii) In the event of an officer standing down during the year, a replacement will be elected by the next General Meeting of members.

- (iv) Any Working Group member, not attending a meeting without apology for three months, will be contacted by the Working Group and asked if they wish to resign.
- (v) The **officers' roles** are as follows:
 - Chair, who shall chair both general and Working Group meetings
 - Vice-Chair, who shall deputise for the Chair
 - Secretary, who shall be responsible for the taking of minutes and the distribution of all papers
 - Membership secretary, who shall be responsible for keeping records of members
 - Treasurer who shall be responsible for maintaining accounts
- (vi) The Working Group has the power to co-opt up to 7 additional members to ensure maximum feasible representativeness of the people who live and/or work in the area.
- (vii) Working Group **Responsibilities**:
 - (a) The overall management of the business of the Forum
 - (b) Agreeing and ensuring the implementation of the Communications and Community Engagement Strategy
 - (c) Coordinating the work of the Sub-Working Groups
 - (d) Drafting, agreeing and promoting the implementation of the Boscombe Neighbourhood Plan
- (viii) Working Group **Meetings**:
 - (a) The Working Group will normally meet monthly, using a variety of venues across the area
 - (b) On three occasions each year the Working Group Meeting will be open to all Forum Members
 - (c) Agenda Papers and Minutes will be posted on the forum Website and will be available in printed format on request
 - (d) The quorum for the Working Group will be 5 members

Meetings of the Forum:

Annual General Meeting

- (i) An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held within fifteen months of the previous AGM.
- (ii) All members will be notified in writing at least 21 days before the date of the meeting, giving the venue, date and time.
- (iii) The quorum for the AGM will be 10% of the membership or 10 members, whichever is the greater number.
- (iv) If a meeting is not quorate, then it will be adjourned giving at least 7 days' notice to members for another meeting restricted to the same agenda. If the meeting is not quorate again, whoever attends the adjourned meeting will constitute a quorum.
- (v) At the AGM:
 - The Chair of the Working Group will present a report of the work of the Forum over the year
 - The Working Group will present the accounts of the Forum for the previous year
 - The officers of the Working Group for the next year will be elected
 - Any proposals given to the Secretary at least 7 days in advance of the meeting will be discussed

Special General Meetings:

- i. The Secretary will call a Special General Meeting at the request of the majority of the Working Group, or, at least fifteen or 10% of the

- membership (whichever is the larger number) giving a written request to the Chair or Secretary stating the reason for their request.
- ii. The meeting will take place within twenty-eight days of the request.
- iii. All members will be given 21 days' notice of such a meeting, giving the venue, date, time and agenda. Notice will be in writing and be posted on the Forum website.
- iv. The quorum for the Special General Meeting will be 10% of the membership or 10 members, whichever is the greater number.
- v. If a meeting is not quorate, then it will be adjourned giving at least 7 days' notice to members for another meeting restricted to the same agenda. If the meeting is not quorate again, whoever attends the adjourned meeting will constitute a quorum.

General Meetings of the Forum: Have Your Say Events:

- i. These events are open to all Forum members and members of the public.
- ii. There will be a minimum of three Events in the year following the AGM.
- iii. The content and structure of these Events will vary according to priorities determined by the Committee. Generally the programme will enable the Forum to:
 - Showcase its activities, particularly the evolving Neighbourhood Plan recruit new members;
 - Enable Forum Working Groups to have discussions with wider groups of local people;
 - Facilitate Q&A sessions with BCC officers, councillors, other organisations and developers with an interest in the area; and
 - Share experiences with voluntary and community sector organisations from elsewhere in the town, and other towns and cities which are preparing and involved in implementing Neighbourhood Plans.

Rules of Procedure for Working Group Meetings, Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings

- (ii) All questions that arise at any meeting will be discussed openly and the meeting will seek to find general agreement that everyone present can agree to.
- (iii) If a consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be taken and a decision will be made by a simple majority of members' show of hands. If the number of votes cast on each side are equal, the chair of the meeting shall have an additional casting vote.

Sub-Working Groups:

- a. The Sub-Working Groups and their Conveners are established by the Working Group.
- b. Conveners each form a Sub-Working Group of a minimum of 2 people from the Forum area.
- c. Sub-Working Groups develop the working arrangements which suit them best and meet as required to investigate and discuss the issues assigned to them.
- d. The Convener reports to the Forum Working Group once per month.

Partner Organisations:

- To further its' aims the Forum will work in partnership with relevant public, private and community/voluntary organisations.
- In particular, the work of the Forum will compliment, rather than duplicate the work of voluntary and community sector organisations in the area.

Finances:

- (i) An account will be maintained on behalf of the Forum at a bank agreed by the Working Group. Five cheque signatories will be nominated by the Working Group (one to be the Treasurer). Any two of five must sign every cheque. The signatories must not be related nor members of the same household.
- (ii) Records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given at each meeting.
- (iii) All money raised by or on behalf of the Forum is only to be used to further the aims of the group as specified on page 1 of this Constitution.

Affiliations, Operations and Independence:

- (i) All members of the Forum shall act in meetings of the Forum, the Working Group, the Sub-Working Groups in the best interests of the Forum and the residents of the area and shall follow the good governance guidelines set out in the attached guidance (or any updating thereof). <http://www.goodgovernancecode.org.uk/>
- (ii) Interest must be declared – whether actual or potential - when appropriate. It is vital the Forum acts with utmost integrity and openness in all matters.
- (iii) The Forum members shall act in accordance with best practice in the preparation of neighbourhood plans and in accordance with Government guidance for such preparation and shall seek to work collaboratively with the Local Planning Authority to achieve this.

Managing Conflicts of Interest:

Member Obligation: You must declare a conflict of interest immediately you are aware of any possibility that your personal or wider interests could influence your decision-making.

a) References to "conflicts" or "conflicts of interest" in this clause include actual or potential conflicts of interest, pecuniary or non-pecuniary and conflicts of loyalty.

b) Conflicts can arise because of a member's personal interests or duties owed to a third party, for example, without limitation, by virtue of being an employee of Bournemouth Council, or of a developer or a company assisting any current or future developments in the area, or by working for or belonging to an organisation that might have a financial interest in the outcome of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Owning a property or business in the area is not in itself a conflict of interest.

c) Conflicts can inhibit open discussions and may result in irrelevant considerations being taken into account when taking decisions.

The Forum aims to operate free from conflicts and manage conflicts appropriately when they arise. As such:

- i) Upon joining, each member must disclose to the Membership Secretary the nature of any interests that may give rise to a conflict. The Membership Secretary shall keep a record of such conflicts.
- ii) Members should be alert to situations that may give rise to a conflict, and promptly inform the Membership Secretary if any such situation arises.
- iii) It is for the member concerned to decide which matters to disclose but, if in doubt, they should make a disclosure.

d) The Working Group may decide how to manage conflicts as it deems appropriate. Without limitation, measures could include excluding a member from voting on certain issues. All conflicts of interest arising in meetings should be recorded in minutes stating, who has the conflict, what the conflict of interest is, and how it was managed.

Amendments to the Constitution:

- (i) Amendments to the constitution may only be made at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.
- (ii) Any proposal to amend the constitution must be given to the Secretary in writing. The proposal must then be circulated with the notice of the meeting.
- (iii) Any proposal to amend the constitution will require a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote at the meeting.

Dissolution:

- (i) If a meeting of the Working Group, by simple majority, decides that it is necessary to close down the Forum, it may call a Special General Meeting to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the group.
- (ii) If it is agreed to dissolve the group, all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid will be donated to a local charitable organisation. The organisation to receive the donation would be agreed at the meeting held to agree the dissolution.