



Community Association

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

- a) The Association shall be known as the Bidwell West Community Association (here after referred to as, the “Association”).
- b) The Association will cover the area of Houghton Regis North 2 (HRN2), also known as Bidwell West, including all infill sites. This area is defined as within Bedford Road (B5120) to the east, Dunstable Northern Bypass (A5) to the north, Watling Street to the west and Houghton Regis Marl Lakes to the south (the “Area”).

2. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- a) To represent and to promote the interests of all residents living in the Area.
- b) To seek to develop a healthy, inclusive, vibrant and thriving community in the Area.
- c) To work in partnership with the council and other agencies to achieve our aims
- d) To represent the interests of residents in consultation with the local authority and other bodies.
- e) The Association shall be non-party political and non-sectarian.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- a) Membership of the Association shall be open to all residents aged over 18 living in the Area
- b) The Association will challenge any remarks or behaviour at meetings that cause offence and make people feel unwelcome.
- c) The Association will take positive action to reach those people that are underrepresented at meetings and events and will ensure that all members have the opportunity to be involved in the Association and its events.
- d) All members shall have voting rights on all issues raised at General Meetings and AGM's that they attend.
- e) Each eligible person shall on request be supplied with a copy of the constitution.

- f) It shall be a condition of membership that members at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner at meetings or in premises used by the Association.
- g) Any members may be excluded for a breach of this condition or for any other conduct contravening the objectives of the Association, by a majority of those present and voting at any General Meeting. Any member so excluded shall have the right of appeal to the following General Meeting.

4. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- a) The Association will be run by a Management Committee of no fewer than 4, and no greater than 12 Association members, elected at the Annual General Meeting by a simple majority of all members present and voting (“the Committee”).
- b) The Committee will be made up of officers, including a Chair, (Possible vice chair), Secretary and Treasurer as well as ordinary members, all appointed to a two-year term (“Term”).
- c) All members within the Area can apply to be appointed to the Committee. Applications must be presented to the secretary in writing at least 28 days prior to the Annual General Meeting or General Meeting when a vacancy arises.
- d) Members who have applied in accordance with clause 4(c) shall be appointed by way of a simple majority, of all members present and voting.
- e) Appointed Committee members can, at the end of each Term and/ or Subsequent Term, run for a further two-year term (“Subsequent Term”). Such Subsequent Term to be at the election, by way of a simple majority, of all members present and voting.
- f) In the scenario where more Members have been nominated than vacancies, those with the highest number of votes will be elected.
- g) The Committee will provide an update to the residents of the area twice a year on their work and how it will positively encourage participation from all sections of the community. This could be in the form of newsletters.
- h) There will be a minimum of 4 Committee meetings held during the course of the Association’s year; one of which can include the Annual General Meeting.
- i) Seven days’ notice of Committee meetings will be given to all members of the Committee.

- j) The quorum for Committee meetings shall be a minimum of 4 members.
- k) Where a casual vacancy (or vacancies) arises on the Committee, it/they will be filled by election at the next General Meeting, or if necessary a Special General Meeting of the Association.
- l) The Committee shall deal with any issues of management of the Association which require decision during the periods between general meetings of the Association, and report these to the next General Meeting.
- m) Committee members who miss more than three consecutive meetings without giving reasonable apologies will be asked to resign their post.
- n) A member of the Committee may be removed or suspended from their post if they bring the good name of the Association into disrepute. A full meeting of the Committee will be called to consider evidence from all sides and a majority vote will be necessary to remove or suspend. Where a majority cannot be reached, the Association Chair shall have the deciding vote.
- o) A member of the Committee resigns their post if they leave the Area for a period of more than 3 consecutive months.

5. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- a) An Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association shall be held once a year (within 13 months of the last AGM).
- b) Notice of the meeting must be made at least 14 days in advance to households and members in a satisfactory manner such as online posts and community noticeboards.
- c) Household and members should be made aware that they will have the opportunity to make nominations for election or stand for election themselves and to vote for the officers and Committee at the meeting.
- d) The quorum for the AGM should be a minimum of 10.
- e) Anyone is welcome to attend the meeting, but only Members are permitted to vote.

At the meeting:

- f) The minutes of the previous AGM will be presented and approved.

- g) The existing Committee will present a report of the Association's activities in the previous year.
- h) Audited accounts for the year will be presented.
- i) The officers for the next year will be elected
- j) Nominations for officers will be accepted only if the person nominated is present at the Annual General Meeting or has put in writing that they want to stand.
- k) If all Members stand down, and there is nobody willing to stand, the Committee will decide whether to start procedures to close the Association down. Alternatively, the Committee can continue in office to try and redevelop the Association for up to six months. It is the responsibility of the Committee to recruit a new Committee or formally dissolve the Association within that period.

6. GENERAL MEETINGS

- a) The business of the Association shall be conducted at General Meetings, which shall be open to all.
- b) The Association will hold a minimum of 4 General Meeting per year one of which could include the Annual General Meeting.
- c) The Association must publicise General Meetings and public events to all households in the Area in order to involve all members and hear their views. All members of the Association will be entitled to attend General Meetings, to speak and to vote. Councillors, Housing Officers, and other stakeholders shall be available where possible to attend each meeting. All other interested parties will be entitled to attend General Meetings and Annual General Meetings but will not be entitled to a vote.
- d) Fourteen days' notice of General Meetings will be given in an appropriate manner to all members.
- e) A quorum for General Meetings will be a minimum of 10. This number of members will need to be present to take a decision on behalf of the Association.
- f) All matters for decision will be decided by a simple majority of those present and voting.

- g) No member shall have more than one vote. Where a majority cannot be reached, the Committee Chair shall have the deciding vote.
- h) Minutes or notes must be kept of all meetings of the Association. The minutes will be presented to the next meeting to be approved. The minutes should be made available to any member of the Association on request and main points should be publicised.
- i) All members of the Association will abide by a Code of Conduct and be expected to treat each other with respect and act in a courteous manner at Association events. The Chair may ask members to leave if their behaviour is disruptive or offensive.

7. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

- a) Special General Meetings may be called at any time for the purpose of altering the constitution, appointing officers to the Committee, or for considering any matter which needs the immediate attention of all members.
- b) Special General Meetings shall be called either at the written request of at least 6 members of the Association, or if the General Meeting decides by a simple majority that it is necessary or advisable.
- c) At least 14 days' notice of any Special General Meeting will be given to members in an appropriate manner, stating the reason(s) for holding the meeting.
- d) All matters for decision will be decided by a simple majority of those present and voting. Where a majority cannot be reached, the Committee Chair shall have the deciding vote.

8. FINANCE

- a) All money raised by or on behalf of the Association shall be applied to cover the running costs of the Association and the achievement of the aims & objectives of the Association and for no other purpose.
- b) The Treasurer shall keep proper account of the finances of the Association and shall open a bank/building society account in the name of the Association and keep copies of all relevant invoices and receipts to support expenditure and income.
- c) The Committee will nominate at least 3 people who can sign cheques and manage electronic banking. These people must not live in the same household or be close family members. If these committee members stand down, they are responsible for

transferring responsibility for the Association bank account to the new committee members. Dual signatories will be standard good practice.

- d) The accounts comprising a detailed income and expenditure account by type of income/cost and a balance sheet shall be independently examined or audited at least once per year. The examined or audited accounts shall be presented to the Annual General Meeting.
- e) The Committee are responsible for the proper use of money raised through grants according to the guidelines issued by the funding body. The Treasurer should keep receipts for all money paid out in expenses to committee members for duties carried out on behalf of the Association.

9. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- a) Any proposals to amend the constitution must be presented to the secretary in writing at least 28 days prior to the meeting at which they are to be considered.
- b) Proposals to amend the constitution must be circulated to all members of the Association with the notice of the meeting.

10. DISSOLUTION

- a) If the General meeting decides at any time by a simple majority that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Association, the officers shall call a meeting of all members, giving at least 14 days' notice in writing and stating the terms of the dissolution resolution to be proposed at the meeting.
- b) A resolution to dissolve the Association shall be agreed by a majority of those present and voting. All outstanding bills will be paid and the balance of any grants and funds held by the Association will be returned or held in trust for up to five years for future Association, charity, or community group within the area.

Constitution Overview

1. The aims and objectives of the Association shall be:
 - a) *To represent and to promote the interests of all residents living in the Area..*
 - b) *To seek to improve conditions for the residents of the Area.*
 - c) *To work in partnership with the council and other agencies to achieve our aims*
 - d) *To represent the interests of residents in consultation with the local authority and other bodies*
 - e) *The association shall be non-party political and non-sectarian.*
2. The Committee shall have a membership that is clearly open to all residents and reflects the community in the area that is covered.
3. The Committee shall hold at least 4 committee meetings and 4 open meetings per year one of which can include the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Minutes should be taken at all of these meetings.
4. Hold an AGM with at least 14 days' notice to all members.
5. The quorum for (i) committee meetings will be a minimum of 4 members and (ii) AGM and General Meetings will be a minimum of 10.
6. The Association will be run by a Management Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Committee will be made up of officers, including a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Ordinary members. It could also include a Vice chair. The Committee will be responsible for the proper handling of finance and present audited financial records at the Annual General Meeting.
7. The Association will hold elections for Committee Members at the end of each current Term and/or when a vacancy arises.
8. The Committee shall provide an annual report at the Annual General Meeting on how the group has met its objectives and present a copy of the audited annual accounts for the last twelve month period.
9. The Committee will provide an update to the residents of the Area twice per year on their work and how it will positively encourage participation from sections of the community. This could be in the form of a newsletter.
10. The Committee should ensure that members behave courteously and should challenge offensive or disruptive behaviour from members.
11. If the General Meeting decides at any time by a simple majority that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Association, the officers shall call a meeting of all members, giving at least 14 days' notice in writing and stating the terms of the dissolution resolution to be proposed at the meeting.
12. A resolution to dissolve the Association shall be agreed by a majority of those present and voting. All outstanding bills will be paid and the balance of any grants and funds held by the association will be returned or held in trust for up to five years for future Association, charity or community group within the Area.