

Constitution for Hastings Sustainable Transport Network

Introduction

This constitution has been developed to set out the aims, objectives and operating processes of Hastings Sustainable Transport Network. Although it contains all the legal requirements of a Constitution it is deliberately written in a clear and simple way so that our procedures can be made as clear as possible to our members, partners and supporters.

1. Name:

Hastings Sustainable Transport Network

2. Aims and objectives of our Group:

To bring together local not for profit groups with an interest in sustainable transport

To raise awareness of sustainable transport issues and develop appropriate linkages with those with a responsibility for planning local transport services or programmes which impact on the Borough

To act as a focal point for consultation and engagement on matters related to sustainable transport

To help inform the development of local, county-wide, regional or national strategies plans or policies.

To monitor and review planning proposals and the implementation of transport-related objectives, policies, projects and actions by Local Authorities and other relevant organisations.

To provide a 'meeting place' where transport issues and concerns can be raised by all members in an open, transparent and inclusive way.

To enable partnership and collaboration and promote information sharing between local groups.

To promote publicise and campaign to promote the implementation of sustainable transport initiatives to benefit local residents and visitors to Hastings.

For the purposes of its work the term sustainable transport is defined as:-

“Local transport which minimise the harmful effects on the environment, mitigate the depletion of resources, and promotes the use of clean fuels resulting in secure effective, accessible and affordable public transport and infrastructure for local communities together with the promotion of walking and cycling”

3. Area of benefit:

The area of benefit is the Borough of Hastings.and St Leonards

4. To achieve these aims we will:

4.1 Explore ways of funding and implement a programme of activity relating to our aims

4.2 Meet at least 4 times per year

4.3 Liaise with relevant bodies including, but not restricted to Hastings Borough Council, East Sussex County Council, Seachange Sussex, the Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group, Hastings Voluntary Action.

5. Membership of our Group:

5.1 Membership shall be open to any local group who subscribes to the aims and objectives of the Group.

5.2 Members will be admitted to the Group by completing a membership form,

5.3 Members, for the purposes of this constitution, will be referred to as 'registered members'.

5.4 Any registered member of the Group can stand for election to the Committee, provided that they are not legally disqualified from acting as a Committee Member

5.5 All registered members of the Group are welcome to attend any sessions, events and meetings organised by the Group.

5.6 Every registered member shall have one vote at general meetings

5.7 At sessions, events and meetings, registered members are expected to behave in a reasonable manner.

5.8 The Chairperson will have the authority to exclude from a meeting or event anyone whose language or behaviour is offensive.

5.9 Co-option of members with skills and knowledge useful to the Group. The Group may co-opt advisors to the Committee. These cannot be officers of the Group and they are not allowed to vote, but they can support and advise the Group. Co-opted members cannot represent the Group at any outside meetings or forums.

5.10 The decision whether to charge a membership fee will be reviewed annually at the Annual General Meeting and will become due within one month of the said meeting.

5.12 The officers of the Management Committee have the power to refuse membership to an applicant, (or terminate the membership of an existing member) where it is considered such membership – or continued membership would be seriously detrimental to the aims, purposes or activities of the Group. It is envisaged that this power would rarely, if ever, be exercised but were this to be necessary provision would be made for:-

- i. Any applicant for membership refused in this way would be informed by the officers, in writing of the grounds on which their application was refused.
- ii. The person or Group affected shall have a right of appeal to the full Management Committee together with a right to address the Committee if they choose to do so.

6. Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated in the following circumstances:-

Resignation – Any registered member may terminate their membership by notifying the Secretary or other officer of their wish to do so.

Lapse of time/Non payment – Any membership which is out of time or not renewed

Suspension/Termination: Where the Management Committee have formally voted to terminate membership, having followed the procedure outlined earlier and ensured that the member or applicant has been notified.

Dissolution/merger: Membership of the Group is non-transferable and ceases on the dissolution of a group or its merger with another organisation.

7. Equal Opportunities statement:

- 7.1 We want people from different backgrounds and with different experiences to participate in our Group.
- 7.2 We strive to make our Group a place where anyone can feel welcome and safe.
- 7.3 We will challenge any remarks or behaviours that cause offence and makes some people feel unwelcome.
- 7.4 We will do our best to overcome any obstacles to people in giving their view or getting involved in our Group.

8. How we will organise our Committee:

- 8.1 We will have at least a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. The Group may elect other officers.

- 8.2 We will have a Committee that will consist of the three officers and other registered members of the Group to carry out the day to day business of the Group. The minimum number on the committee will be five. There is no maximum number.

9. How we will make sure we are democratic:

Once per year (no later than after 15 months) we will hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) This is where the officers and Committee will be elected by majority vote. Written notice, and an opportunity to nominate people for officers and Committee, will be sent to every registered member. Nominations in advance or from the floor will be accepted only if the person nominated is present at the AGM or has put in writing that they wish to stand. At least 1/3rd of the registered members of the Group have to be present at the AGM, to form the quorum..

10, What happens at the Annual General Meeting:

- 10.1 The minutes of the previous AGM will be presented and approved;
- 10.2 A review of the activities of the Group will be given;
- 10.3 The existing Committee will stand down;
- 10.4 The Officers and Committee for the next year will be elected.
- 10.5 We will aim to have an independent person available to take the election;
- 10.6 Any amendments to the Constitution will be voted on
- 10.7 We will appoint an external scrutineer to make sure that all expenditure and income is recorded and that we have good systems for looking after any funding we have.
- 10.8 We will review any membership fee
- 10.9 We will invite questions, comments and discussion from our members to help steer our work and priorities for the next year

If there is no-one willing to stand, the Committee will decide whether to start procedures to close the Group down. Alternatively, the Committee can continue in office to try and redevelop the Group for up to 6 months. It is the responsibility of the Committee to recruit a new Committee or formally dissolve the Group within that period.

11. Extraordinary General Meetings:

- 11.1 An EGM, open to all registered members, will be convened if 50% or more of the registered members request this in writing to the Secretary, stating their reason for wanting one. This could be in the form of a letter signed by 50% of the registered members. The Secretary will ensure that the meeting is held within 28 days and that all registered members are given prior notice.

12. How many people need to be present to make a Committee decision and how will this be arrived at:

- 12.1 At least 2/3rd of the Committee members have to be present to make a decision on behalf of the Group.
- 12.2 All members of the Committee should be consulted on the dates and venues
- 12.3 The Committee will try to work by consensus (i.e. we will try to come to an agreement) but where this is not possible, decisions will be made by majority vote
- 12.4 In the event of a tied vote the Chairperson shall decide on whether the issue would benefit from further discussion but in the event of an issue being dead-locked the Chair shall have a casting or deciding vote.

13. How will people know what has been decided:

- 13.1 We will keep minutes of all meetings of the Group
- 13.2 We will note down what has been agreed or decided and who is responsible for any action points involved in that decision. The minutes will be presented to the next meeting and have to be approved.
- 13.3 Any registered member of the Group has the right to read the minutes of any Committee meeting.

14. Responsibilities of the Officers:

The Chairperson will:

- Usually chair all meetings;
- Ensure that all present can contribute without interruption or intimidation;
- Prepare the agenda with the Secretary and ensure that agenda items are fully discussed and implemented where possible.

The Secretary will:

- Deal with all correspondence;
- Keep minutes and records;
- Keep all members informed;
- Prepare the agenda with the Chairperson;

The Treasurer will:

- Keep up to date records of all financial transactions;
- Ensure all members of the Group receive their expenses promptly;
- Make regular financial reports;
- Prepare accounts for the external scrutineer
- Present externally scrutinised accounts to the AGM;

Members of the Committee will:

- Work as part of a team;
- Have the right to represent the Group on outside bodies;
- Act in the best interests of the Group at all times;
- Conduct themselves in a way which respects others;
- Declare to the Committee any conflict of interest and abide by any decision about how that conflict should be dealt with

15. Finance:

- 15.1 The Committee can raise funds on behalf of the Group as they see fit, as long as it is used in line with the aims and objectives of the Group.
- 15.2 We will either open a bank account that provides a cheque book for the Group and we will nominate 2 signatories for all cheques or ask an existing organisation to hold our funds in a protected account requiring the authority of 2 committee members for any transactions or payments.
- 15.3 Our signatories or those who approve payments will not be members of the same household
- 15.4 The Group will keep receipts for all funds paid out.
- 15.5 Any expenses incurred must be approved by the committee prior to purchase
- 15.6 We will ensure that the finances of the group are subject to independent examination by an approved practitioner to ensure that our financial record keeping and management of our funding is robust.

16. How to change the Constitution:

The Constitution may only be amended at an AGM or at an EGM. If anyone wants to make any changes to this document, they have to put them in writing and send them to the Secretary before the meeting. The Secretary will let all the registered members know prior to the meeting that a change to the Constitution will be on the agenda. Changes to the Constitution must not weaken the Group's commitment to equal opportunities.

17. How we can dissolve the Group:

- 17.1 The Group may only be dissolved at a general meeting.
- 17.2 All registered members have to be informed that a decision about the future of the Group will be on the agenda.
- 17.3 It is the responsibility of the outgoing Committee to ensure that all registered members are informed in advance of the meeting and its purpose.
- 17.4 A proposal to dissolve the Group will only be carried if agreed by two thirds of the registered members present or if the Group is unable to form a Committee
- 17.5 All outstanding bills will be paid.
- 17.6 Funders will be contacted, and where appropriate, funding will be returned to the relevant funder.

17.7 The remaining funds and possessions will be donated to a not for profit Group in the Hastings & St Leonard's area whose work most closely aligns with our aims and objectives..

18. What we can do, if details are not clear:

Any interpretation of this document or any additional points not covered as yet will be decided by a majority vote of the Committee and ratified by a general meeting. The question should then be referred to the next AGM in the form of an amendment to the constitution.