

## THE NORWOOD FORUM CONSTITUTION – **Final version for ratification at AGM**

### 1. NAME AND STATUS

- a. The name of the organisation shall be **THE NORWOOD FORUM** (the Forum).
- b. The Forum is a not-for-profit community organisation run by local volunteers elected annually.
- c. The Forum is a member of the London Borough of Lambeth's 'Lambeth Forum Network'.

*The Lambeth Forum Network (LFN) is a borough-wide network of volunteer-run forums. Each area forum sets its own priorities based on local needs and ambitions. LFN forums also work together to increase the voice of local groups and residents in borough-wide decision-making. The LFN currently receives annual seed-funding from the Council which is distributed to the LFN members according to a peer decision-making process. Each Forum has to produce a detailed annual bid to receive the funding and provide information to an annual monitoring and review meeting run by Lambeth Officers to evidence how the funding was spent.*

### 2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- a. The purpose of the Forum is to promote local involvement in public policy making and service provision at community level.
- b. The Forum shall seek to represent and serve the area comprising the Lambeth wards of Knight's Hill, Gipsy Hill, West Dulwich and the south-eastern area of St Martin's centred on Tulse Hill railway station, hereafter referred to as 'Norwood'. This area may be narrowed or widened as required by the interests of the Forum.
- c. The objectives of the Forum include:
  - i. Involve local people in shaping and strongly influencing the policies and programmes of Lambeth Council and other relevant agencies
  - ii. Understand the needs and aspirations of all members of the Norwood community
  - iii. Secure timely consultation with Lambeth Council and other relevant agencies and stakeholders to raise awareness of initiatives at local level
  - iv. Provide a platform for local people to voice their views
  - v. Monitor and comment on the impact of Lambeth Council policies, programmes, and performance on the Norwood area
  - vi. Act as a proactive voice on behalf of local communities in the Norwood area, proposing initiatives and identifying specific priorities and problems
  - vii. Identify, where possible, opportunities for regeneration and investment, whilst also protecting and enhancing the historic and diverse character of the Norwood area
  - viii. Use its influence to help promote and market the Norwood area
  - ix. Identify ways of improving the local environment and amenity
  - x. To promote equality of opportunity in the Norwood area such that all members of the community can partake equally in the life of the community and are able to contribute fully to the work of the Forum.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP**

- a. Membership of the Forum shall be open to any individual who lives, works or studies in Norwood and is interested in furthering the Forum's objectives, who also accepts and abides by the Code of Conduct for Forum Members at Annex 1 of this Constitution and our other approved policies for the duration of their membership.
- b. A member is an individual who has signed up to receive the Forum newsletter and in doing so has provided their name, email and postcode. This information is stored securely and in accordance with the Forums Privacy Policy that complies with national legislation. If the member asks to unsubscribe, or unsubscribes themselves, they will no longer be deemed to be a member.

### **4. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

- a. The Committee shall ensure that the Forum complies with the law in the United Kingdom and The Equality Act 2010, and any relevant addendums.
- b. The Forum is dedicated to encouraging a supportive and inclusive culture among the Forum committee members, Forum members and the community it represents. The aim is to ensure that the people who live, work and study in Norwood have an equal opportunity to participate in decision-making and Forum events and are encouraged to do so.
- c. The Forum committee seeks to represent all sections of the community, and to this end has developed a set of principles as laid out in our approved EDI policy available to all on our website.

### **5. MEETINGS**

- a. Forum AGMs, EGMs and public meetings shall be open to anyone to attend.
- b. An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held in or about June of each year and within no more than 15 months of the previous AGM, to receive the Forum Committee's report, annual statement of accounts, and to elect committee members. Notice of an AGM will be provided no less than 21 days beforehand.
- c. Each candidate for membership of the Committee must secure a majority vote at the AGM/EGM (see 5.f).
- d. The Committee shall decide when other public meetings of the Forum shall be held.
- e. An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) shall be convened at any time by the Chair on behalf of the Committee or on written request for such a meeting signed by at least 30 members and specifying the business to be transacted. The Committee must convene the EGM within 35 days of receipt of a valid written request and, if on behalf of the Chair, notice will be provided no less than 21 days beforehand.
- f. Voting decisions at an AGM, EGM, or ordinary meeting shall be made by simple majority, with the Chair holding the casting vote (except for Constitutional amendments as outlined in 5.k).
- g. Persons may cast only one vote in any Forum vote.
- h. Motions submitted at general meetings must be proposed and seconded by members.
- i. The Chair shall accept motions for consideration and hold votes on valid motions at an appropriate time on the agenda.
- j. A quorum for a meeting of the Forum where a vote is taken shall be 30 members.
- k. Changes to the Constitution can only be considered at either AGMs or EGMs. This Constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting at an AGM or EGM. The notice of the AGM or EGM that

considers a constitutional alteration must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.

## **6. OFFICERS**

- a. The Officers are elected to serve one term of approximately twelve months – that is, the period between the first committee meeting held after consecutive AGM's.
  - b. The Officers of the Forum shall be: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.
  - c. The Officers will be selected by the elected committee members at the first committee meeting following the AGM/EGM. Nominations supported by a seconder and with the prior consent of the nominee, shall be made to the outgoing Secretary in accordance with a timetable notified at the AGM/EGM. Nominee's must have served on the Committee for a minimum of one year, but the Committee may consider extenuating circumstances.
  - d. The Officers shall relinquish their office every year and shall be eligible for re-election. The Committee shall have the power to fill casual vacancies occurring among the Officers
7. Any individual being proposed for election or serving as a member of the Forum committee should have regard to the Constitution and policies of the Forum. In respect of the Conflict of Interest Policy, the individual must consider and declare on their nomination form any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest that may affect their ability to act in the best interests of the Forum. This includes financial, personal, or professional interests. The Committee reserves the right to request further information from nominees regarding their application to serve on the Committee or as an officer, including information regarding association with Norwood, previous experience or expertise that may be relevant, and possible conflicts of interest. Nominees agree to make available relevant information for consideration by the Committee and Forum.

## **8. FORUM COMMITTEE**

- a. The Committee members are elected to serve one term of approximately twelve months - that is, the period between two consecutive AGM's.
- b. The Committee shall have a maximum of 15 members.
- c. The Committee shall be responsible for managing and administering the Forum, including compliance with, maintenance of, and annual review of:
  - The Privacy Policy
  - The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
  - The Conflict of Interest Policy.
- d. The Committee shall hold at least six meetings each year.
- e. To protect the integrity of the Forum's decision-making processes and ensure that all committee members act in the best interests of the Forum, a Conflict of Interest Policy has been adopted.
- f. Within 28 days of appointment to the Norwood Forum committee, each committee member will complete the Declaration of Interests form. The hard copy form will be kept on file and made available for inspection to all Forum committee and general members, on request, and made available at in-person committee meetings (this will be the responsibility of the Administrator under advice from the Secretary). Each committee member is responsible for keeping their declaration form up to date within 28 days of a change in circumstances and to review their form at least annually prior to the AGM.

- g. At each committee meeting, conflicts of interest will be the first item on the agenda. In addition, committee members should make necessary declarations if the need to do so becomes clear through discussions at the meeting. Once a conflict is declared, the Chair will consult with the committee on the best course of action:
  - Either: the conflicted member may be excluded from the relevant discussion.
  - Or: the conflicted member may participate in the discussion but must abstain from voting.
- h. The Chair will ensure that the final decision and reasons regarding the conflict is recorded in the meeting minutes. The member concerned is responsible for any necessary updating of their conflict of interest form.
- i. The Committee may fill any vacancies that may arise amongst its membership during the year, and to appoint on a temporary basis individuals whose skills or expertise may be required to facilitate the work of the Forum.
- j. All Committee members shall have the right to vote.
- k. One third of the Committee's members shall constitute a quorum.
- l. In the event of an equality of votes cast at a Committee meeting, the Chair shall have a casting vote.
- m. If neither the Chair or the Vice-Chair is present, the Forum shall elect one from its number to preside in an acting capacity.
- n. Where it would help further its objectives, the Committee may seek the Forum's membership of other organisations and nominate individual members to represent the Forum in such organisations.
- o. Any Officer or Committee member absent or has not played an active role in Forum work for a period covering three consecutive committee meetings, shall be asked to leave the Committee. The Committee officers will keep attendance at meetings under review, and may agree retention of a Committee member in extenuating circumstances.

## **8. SUB-COMMITTEES – REWRITE – scroll to end**

- a. The Committee may set up at any time as many sub-committees and other advisory, project or campaigns groups (described going forward as 'specialist-groups') as it deems necessary.  
 Membership is not restricted to committee or general members.  
 These groups may have long term areas of responsibility such as planning application issues or may be short term advisory, project or campaign groups.  
 Each sub-group will have a nominated Lead who will be responsible for completing a committee meeting report form when asked to do so by the Administrator under the guidance of the Secretary.  
 The Lead will be responsible for bringing to the Committee Officers any issues and decision making that they feel require wider discussion and/or approval – especially those with strategic implications. The Officers will decide if such issues should go to the full committee for further debate, again especially for those with strategic implications.

## **9. FUNDING AND EXPENDITURE**

- a. The Committee may raise funds and invite and receive grants, subscriptions and donations.
- b. The Committee may open and operate bank accounts in the name of the Forum.
- c. The Committee shall, out of the Forum's funds, pay all properly authorised administrative and management expenses. After paying these expenses, the remaining funds shall be applied by the Committee to further the Forum's objectives.

- d. No expenditure shall be made or financial commitment entered into without the prior agreement of the committee officers.
- e. The Forum Treasurer shall keep proper accounts, monitor income and expenditure, reporting at least quarterly to the Committee and presenting annual accounts to the AGM for approval. The accounts are also presented to the Lambeth Forum Network as part of the annual grant monitoring scheme.
- f. A minimum of two Officers shall be empowered to authorise expenditure drawn on the Forum's bank account(s) with two approvals being required on each occasion.

## **10. WINDING UP**

- a. The Forum may be dissolved by a two thirds majority of eligible members voting at an AGM or EGM. If a motion for the Forum's dissolution is to be proposed, specific reference shall be made to this motion when giving notice of the meeting. In the event of dissolution, the Forum's available funds shall be transferred to one or more organisations having similar objectives, to be chosen by the Committee. However, any unspent or uncommitted funds given for a specific purpose shall, wherever practicable, be returned to the donor. On dissolution the Forum's records shall be offered to Lambeth Archives and Lambeth Council.

## **Annex 1**

### **Code of Conduct of Forum Members**

- a. All Norwood Forum members must conduct themselves in a way that does not cause offence to others or bring the Forum into disrepute.
- b. Forum members, and Forum Committee members, must act in accordance with the Constitution and Forum policies as appropriate.
- c. Members must treat others with respect and must avoid racist, sexist or other derogatory remarks or actions.
- d. Members must allow others to speak without interruption or other inappropriate behaviour.
- e. Members must be sensitive to the needs of those who may not be used to speaking in public or whose first language is not English.
- f. Committee members are required to treat all material, and committee and private decisions as confidential to Norwood Forum Committee members only.
- g. Members who feel that this Code of Conduct has been breached should raise the matter with the Chair at the earliest opportunity, for the Chair to take appropriate action, including removal from meetings and/or membership of the Committee and/or the Forum.

## **Annex 2**

*This Annex does not form part of the Norwood Forum Constitution*

### **Officer's Duties**

This annex sets out the primary duties of the Committee officers: the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Where the Forum elects 'job shares' the roles remain as described and the sharing of responsibilities agreed with the Officers. Other duties may be added from time to time, or moved from one officer to another, by the Chair. Where there are vacancies, the responsibilities will need to be shared between the Committee officers (the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer).

#### **1. Chair**

- a. Provide leadership to the Committee and the Forum and in the first instance consider any complaints against Committee members.
- b. Chair public meetings of the Forum and meetings of the Forum Committee
- c. Represent the Forum at meetings of other organisations and public bodies.
- d. Act as the public face and spokesperson for the Forum.
- e. Produce an annual report of the Forum's work, for presentation at the AGM.
- f. Act as the main point of contact between the Forum and local authorities, as well as with London and national Government representatives.
- g. Prepare agendas for Forum Committee meetings, in consultation with the Secretary and Vice-Chair, and set requirements on written reports for each meeting and the deadlines to apply so as to ensure agenda papers are circulated at least two working days before meetings.
- h. Prepare agendas for the public meetings, in consultation with the Forum Committee.
- i. Approve draft committee meeting minutes for circulation to Committee members and the record of public meetings (including the AGM), in consultation with other Committee officers.
- j. To ensure compliance with, and to keep under review, the Forum constitution, policies and activities.

#### **2. Vice Chair**

- a. Act as the deputy to the Chair and deputise for the Chair in his/her absence.
- b. Provide general support for the Chair.
- c. Agree agendas for Committee meetings with the Chair and Secretary.

#### **3. Secretary**

To deploy the Forum Administrator as appropriate, and in consultation with the other Committee officers, to:

- a. Arrange meetings of the Forum Committee and public meetings, including booking the venues.
- b. Prepare and publish agendas as appropriate.
- c. Arrange publicity for public meetings and other Forum activity.
- d. Organise speakers for public meetings, ensuring they are familiar with the Forum and with what is expected of them.

- e. Arrange any necessary public address, projection and sound recording systems required by speakers.
- f. Produce an appropriate record of meetings, submitting draft committee minutes to the following committee meeting for approval and subsequent publication on the website.
- g. Ensure that all agreed actions are carried out.
- h. Arrange for venues to be set up before the meeting.
- i. To maintain the Forum website and social media pages.
- j. To ensure regular e-newsletters are shared with the members and more widely.
- k. To maintain the Conflict of Interests Policy and Declarations of Interest Register.
- l. To ensure the Privacy Policy reflects current data protection legislation.
- m. To ensure the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy reflects current legislation.
- n. To ensure an annual review of the Forum's policies as necessary.

#### **4. Treasurer**

- a. Ensure the Forum's financial viability and that resources meet current and future needs.
- b. Maintain accurate records of all items of income and expenditure.
- c. Maintain the Forum's bank accounts.
- d. Report on the Forum's finances to all committee meetings.
- e. Prepare an annual statement of accounts.
- f. Present a financial report to the AGM.
- g. Pay all agreed Forum expenses as appropriate.
- h. Prepare and send out invoices and ensure payment.
- i. Ensure, where necessary, that speakers' expenses are paid.
- j. Arrange fund raising activities as needed by the work of the Forum.
- k. Ensure that the Forum carries adequate and appropriate insurance cover for its meetings and for those undertaking activities on the Forum's behalf.

#### **5. Committee Members**

- a. Ensure that the Forum complies with its constitution and any statutory and other obligations.
- b. Ensure that the Forum's financial stability and use of its resources only in accordance with its objectives.
- c. Contribute actively to the Forum's work, supporting the Officers and participating in committee and public meetings.
- d. Volunteer to take on specific duties as the need arises.