

LEEDS PARKS AND GREEN SPACES FORUM CONSTITUTION

Legal Form: *Unincorporated association*

Type of organisation: *Voluntary/community*

1. NAME

The name of the organisation shall be **Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum**.

2. GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

The focus of the forum is the Metropolitan District of Leeds. Organisations that are based outside that area but have an interest within Leeds may also be members.

3. AIMS

The aims of the Forum are as follows:

- To protect, preserve and enhance the parks, green spaces* and other green infrastructure of Leeds for the benefit of people and wildlife.
- To facilitate regular communication, skill sharing and partnership working between Leeds City Council and Forum members.
- To act as a consultation body for decisions being made that affect green spaces (existing or potential) in Leeds.
- To influence policy for the benefit of parks and green spaces in Leeds.
- To advocate the value of parks and green spaces to decision makers and the general public.
- To engage more local people in caring for parks and green spaces.
- To support voluntary groups that care for green spaces in Leeds.
- To raise funds for the benefit of Parks and Green Spaces and their users.
- To represent the interests of parks and green spaces and lobby for these to decision makers and to Leeds City Council, other public sector bodies and the private sector as relevant.

4. POWERS

To further these aims the committee shall have power to:

- Admit to membership organisations who share the aims of the forum.

- Work in partnership with other organisations with similar aims.
- Recruit volunteers and employ paid staff.
- Organise and hold regular (being no less than 2 per annum) meetings of forum members and Leeds City Council Officers.
- Comment on decisions that impact on the provision of green spaces in Leeds.
- Carry out and publish results of research such as public surveys.
- Collect and disseminate relevant information.
- Identify funds, fundraise, manage and administer funds.
- Publicise parks and green spaces (and their benefits) using various means including printed media, press releases, the internet and social media.
- Undertake events and activities.
- Share relevant knowledge, skills and experience.
- Carry out other such lawful activities required to further the aims of the forum.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Forum is committed to being accessible and inclusive for all and to treat everyone fairly and equally regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and physical and mental ability.

6. MEMBERSHIP

Members: Membership shall be open to individuals, groups and organisations who share some or all of the aims of the Forum.

Membership details shall be kept by the secretary and updated annually.

Membership is by application to the management committee.

The management committee reserves the right to approve or reject applications for membership or to terminate membership if it is felt members are not acting in accordance with the constitution and/or the stated aims of the Forum.

Organisations should nominate no more than two people as representatives to attend Forum meetings.

7. MANAGEMENT

A management committee elected annually at the Annual General Meeting shall manage the affairs of the Forum.

The committee shall consist of four Honorary Officers including a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

The committee shall also contain up to six other ordinary members.

City councillors and council officers will not hold the position of Forum Chair

The Chair so elected at an AGM can serve for a maximum of 3 consecutive years.

The management committee may appoint sub-committees, or co-opt additional committee members where they offer specific skills or experience for such purposes and with such powers as it thinks fit.

Representing the Forum: The Chair (or Vice Chair in absence of the Chair) may respond on behalf of the Forum on any issue where the Forum is consulted or asked for its views. Before responding the Chair will, if possible, refer issues to the committee, consider views previously expressed by the Forum and carry out further consultation with Forum members if possible in the time available.

8. MEETINGS

Annual General Meetings

An Annual General Meeting shall be held within 15 months of the date of the adoption of this constitution and each year thereafter.

The business of the AGM shall include:

- i. The election of the committee
- ii. The presentation of the accounts relating to the previous year

A notice of the AGM shall be published at least three weeks beforehand and an agenda and report on the Group's financial position for the previous year will be made available at the same time.

A Special General Meeting may be called at any time at the request of the committee, or not less than one quarter of the membership. A notice explaining the place, date, name, time and reason shall be sent to all members at least three weeks beforehand.

One third of membership or at least 8 members being present, whichever is the greater, shall enable a General Meeting to take place.

Committee meetings

The committee shall meet at least 4 times each year.

Committee meetings are open to all members but only committee members will be able to vote at them.

A quorum for any meeting of the committee shall be 4 members.

Agenda items should be submitted at least 1 week before the meeting.

Forum meetings

The Forum shall meet at least 2 times each year.

Agenda items should be submitted at least 1 week before the meeting.

Sub-committees

Sub-committees or working groups can be set up by the committee or main forum and these may meet to look at a particular subject. The outcome of those meetings would then be fed back to the committee or main forum for decision making purposes.

A proper record of all transactions and meetings shall be kept.

9. DECISION MAKING

The Forum will aim to reach decisions by consensus.

If a consensus cannot be reached on a particular decision then it shall be made by the majority of the votes cast.

If there is an equality of votes the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.

City councillors and council officers are welcome to attend but will be non-voting.

10. ACCOUNTS

The funds of the Forum including all donations, contributions and grants shall be paid into an account operated by the management committee.

The committee shall be responsible for maintaining accounts of all money raised and all sums disbursed on behalf of the Forum.

All cheques drawn on the account must be signed by at least two members of the management committee. Those with authority to be signatories shall be the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

The funds belonging to the Forum shall be applied only to further the aims as stated above.

A current record of all income and expenditure will be kept and reported at committee meetings and the AGM.

An independent auditor appointed by the committee shall audit the accounts at least once a year before the AGM.

Any member having an interest in the funds of the Forum may be allowed to inspect the books and records of the organisation provided that 28 days notice is given in writing.

11. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

Proposals to change the constitution must be given in writing to the secretary (and disseminated to members) at least 28 days before a General Meeting and approved by a two thirds majority of those present and voting.

12. DISSOLUTION

The Forum may be dissolved by a resolution passed by a simple two thirds majority of those present and voting at a General Meeting.

If dissolution is confirmed, the committee shall distribute any assets remaining after the payment of all bills to other charitable organisations having aims similar to the group.

**'Parks and Green Spaces' in the context of this constitution refers to outdoor recreational areas for the public such as city, community and pocket parks, nature areas, woodlands, public rights of way, sports pitches, recreation grounds, flower beds, floral displays, cemeteries and crematoria, city farms and allotments.*

This constitution was agreed at the AGM of the Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum held on 10 July 2013.