

# CONSTITUTION OF THE ALPHINGTON FORUM

## 1. NAME

The name of the organisation shall be The Alphington Forum (hereafter referred to as the Group).

## 2. MISSION AND AIMS

**Mission:** To ensure Alphington's unique character is enhanced and maintained.

**Aims:**

- To safeguard and promote the interest of residents in Alphington on matters concerning housing, developments and the local environment .
- To act as a channel of communication with planning authorities and other bodies to ensure that residents' views are taken into account.
- To assist and work with other local organisations whose mutual aim is the well-being of Alphington.
- To help to improve the social, environmental, economic and cultural living conditions, community facilities, and services for residents living in Alphington.

## Principles

In order to do this the Alphington Forum will not be aligned or associated with any political party. The Group is committed to representing the views of Alphington residents. The Group will uphold equal opportunities and work towards good relations amongst all members of the community, specifically prohibiting any conduct which discriminates or harasses on grounds of race, religion, disability, sex or sexual orientation, or any other improper ground.

## 3. MEMBERSHIP

- a) Membership shall be open to all residents (not businesses), irrespective of tenure, in the geographical area bounded by the Alphington Ward boundary
- b) All full voting members must be at least 16 years of age.
- c) Membership shall cease immediately upon a person leaving the area defined in paragraph 3a).
- d) Membership shall be free of subscription initially but this may be amended at an AGM (in which case a fair, equitable subscription and a subscription renewal date will be agreed)
- e) A category of Associate membership (as opposed to Full Membership) shall exist, with rights to attend but not to vote at public meetings and the Annual General Meeting (AGM). This category shall include any residents who are also holding the office of local councillor, as well as local business owners, and minors aged 12 to 15, with the permission of a parent or guardian.

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### **4. THE COMMITTEE**

- a) A Committee shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the group and shall serve for 12 months.
- b) The Committee shall consist of the Office Bearers which are Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, and at least three other full members. The committee shall have the power to co-opt other members on to the Committee, during the course of the year, and may serve until the next AGM. All members will have voting rights. The Chair will be responsible for chairing the meetings, the Secretary will keep minutes, a record of members and be responsible for all correspondence, and the Treasurer will be responsible for keeping accurate accounts and making and receiving any payments on behalf of the forum. The Secretary may appoint a minute taker when appropriate. Office-bearers shall be elected by majority vote of the FULL members and may not remain in position for more than two years, after which time they can stand for re-election. Half the Committee shall stand down each year
- c) No Committee member shall fill more than one position.
- d) The Committee and Office Bearers shall make and carry out decisions to further the mission and aims of the group.
- e) Meetings of the committee shall be open to any full member of the group who wishes to attend. Associate members can attend by invitation of the committee.
- f) There must be at least three Committee members present for any decisions to be made at a Committee meeting.
- g) Voting members may be co-opted from residents to fill casual vacancies throughout the year and may serve until the next AGM.
- i) Committee members shall automatically be deemed to have resigned from the Committee if they have not attended three consecutive meetings without good reason and have not submitted their apologies.
- j) Committee members must declare any interest they may have in the topic under discussion and the Committee will decide if they need to forfeit their right to vote and, if necessary, leave the room, on this occasion.
- k) The forum's web site, publicity and communication shall be managed by the Committee.

### **5. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS OR STANDING ORDERS**

- a) Members shall respect the Chair's role to be responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- b) if a consensus is not reached, decisions will be agreed by a simple majority, voted in through a show of hands, or a secret ballot.

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- c) Meetings will end at the time agreed by the committee unless all those present agree to extend the meeting.
- d) Any offensive behaviour, including racist, ageism, sexist or inflammatory remarks will not be permitted.
- e) Any member who brings the group into disrepute or refuses to comply with the constitution shall be expelled on a majority vote of the full Committee.
- f) Any such member will have the right to appeal within 28 days of the expulsion. The appeal shall be heard by the membership at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose.
- g) The Secretary shall deal with all correspondence.
- h) One week's notice of a meeting will be sent to members. Agendas will be distributed to the membership at least four days before a meeting. Items for the agenda should be forwarded to the Secretary and/or Chair seven days before the meeting, where possible.
- i) Approved minutes will be distributed to the membership 7 days after a meeting, where possible.

### **6. FINANCES**

- a) The group may raise funds by obtaining grants from other bodies or by fundraising schemes. All money raised by or on behalf of the Group shall be applied to further its mission and aims.
- b) All funds shall be kept in a bank account that shall be opened in the name of the Group.
- c) The Secretary, Treasurer and the Chair shall be signatories on the account and all cheques shall require two of these signatures.
- d) Accounts shall be kept by the Treasurer, and brought to every Committee meeting where they may be inspected. Failure to bring the books to a meeting on three consecutive occasions will mean the Treasurer will be asked to resign.
- e) All expenditure shall be agreed and controlled by the Committee. Receipts should be acquired for all expenditure over one pound.
- f) All payments over ten pounds shall be made by cheque, not cash. Any exception to this rule shall be discussed and agreed by the committee.
- g) No office bearer shall sign a blank cheque – all cheques to be filled in before signatures are added.
- h) Once a year, the accounts will be verified and presented to the Annual General Meeting of the group.
- i) All correspondence of the Group including the bank statement, shall be addressed to the secretary.

### **7. PUBLIC MEETINGS**

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- a) Public meetings of the members shall be held regularly, at least twice a year, to discuss matters of importance and to keep the members fully informed of the Group's activities.
- b) Members shall be given 14 days' notice of a public meeting.
- c) All votes shall be decided by a simple majority of the full members present. This applies to all meetings of the group.
- d) Any full member, having the written support of 20 other members (or at least 50% of the membership, if less), may request the Committee to call a Special Public Meeting of the Group. The Committee shall call the meeting within 21 days of this written request.

### **8. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**

- a) An AGM shall be held every year to discuss the activities of the group, to receive a report of activity, the verified accounts and to elect the Committee.
- b) The AGM shall be held at a suitable venue to accommodate as many members as possible.
- c) The quorum shall be 51 % of full members present, with a minimum of 5 attendees.
- d) At least 14 days' notice of the AGM shall be given to full members
- e) At the AGM the resignation of Committee members will be accepted and a new Committee elected.

### **9. CHANGES TO CONSTITUTION**

- a) This constitution shall only be changed at a Special Public Meeting of the group, or at the AGM.
- b) For decisions to be taken there must be a quorum of at least 51% of full members present, with a minimum of 5 attendees. The voting shall be by simple majority of those present.
- c) All members shall be given 14 days' notice of the meeting and proposed changes.
- d) Proposed changes must be submitted to the secretary in writing not less than 28 days before the AGM. The secretary must notify members of any proposed changes within 21 days of the meeting.

### **10. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS.**

- a) The Group will ensure that any activities they are responsible for will be a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults.
- b) If Group activities are to involve children a Safeguarding Children Policy will be adopted and a Committee member will be appointed to take responsibility for its implementation. A similar proviso applies to activities involving vulnerable adults.

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## 11. DISSOLUTION OF THE GROUP

- a) The group may only be dissolved by a Special meeting called for that purpose. Such a meeting shall come about following a proposal in writing signed by a simple majority of those remaining on the Committee being submitted to the Secretary.
- b) All members shall be informed of such a meeting at least 21 days before the date of the meeting.
- c) Dissolution of the group shall only take effect if agreed by two thirds of the members present and eligible to vote at that meeting.
- d) Any assets remaining after meeting liabilities must be distributed among local charities or another community group with similar aims to the Group, nominated by that meeting.
- e) Any money received via funding bodies should be returned to the funders in relation to the rules of the funding bodies.
- f) On dissolution, any documents belonging to the group shall be disposed of in a manner agreed by that meeting.

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**This constitution was adopted at a meeting of the Alphington Forum on: .....**

	<b>Signed</b>	<b>Print name</b>
<b>Chair</b>		
<b>Secretary</b>		
<b>Treasurer</b>		