

# Prestwich Village Neighbourhood Forum

## CONSTITUTION

**1.** The name of the Organisation shall be Prestwich Village Neighbourhood Forum, (hereinafter called the “Forum”) as defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, amended by the Localism Act 2011. The area covered by the Forum shall be the area as shown on the map accompanying the designation application, known as the Prestwich Neighbourhood Area.

### **2. The Purpose and Vision of the Forum**

The purpose of the Forum is to promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Neighbourhood Area. The Forum aims to ensure that Prestwich Village continues to be a thriving, safe and friendly village where people will want to live, work and spend their leisure time. We, the Forum, will engage with the community to discuss local issues, concerns, support sustainable and accessible development, in keeping with climate change objectives, during both the forthcoming regeneration project and further future development beyond this in accordance with the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.

### **3. Neighbourhood Plan**

The Forum shall prepare a Neighbourhood Plan to help guide future development across the Plan area. The Plan area shall coincide with the area covered by the Prestwich Village Neighbourhood Forum (as depicted by the red line boundary likely to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan)

### **4. Governance & Structure - Forum, Management & Liability**

4.1 The Forum must have a minimum of 21 members at all times

4.2 The Forum shall be administered by a Steering Group which shall meet at least once per year other than the AGM and shall aspire to be comprised of both local residents, businesses,

Councillors and also representatives of local organisations. Hereinafter referred to as 'Members'. These Members shall be voluntary and should not be paid by the Forum for attendance, but may if the Steering Group decides claim reasonable expenses when incurred in the business of the Group.

4.3 The Forum is committed to equality of opportunity and maintains and applies an Equal Opportunities Policy in all of its activities (see Appendix 1)

4.4 The Forum is a non-profit making organisation and any surplus finances shall be used to enhance the area covered by the Forum. Consideration is being given to incorporation as a CIC to maintain the Forum.

## **5 The Steering Group**

5.1 The Steering Group membership may be composed of up to:

- a) 25% Councillors and Council Officers
- b) 25% representatives of local businesses
- c) with the balance being made up by local residents

(Although absence of 'a' and 'b' shall not prevent the Steering group or Forum from carrying out its' aims and objectives, nor shall it affect any decisions made on behalf of the Forum by the Steering Group.)

5.2 The Steering Group shall appoint from its membership the following Officers who ideally shall reflect both the different geographic and demographic places in the Neighbourhood Area and different sections of the community:

Chairperson; Vice Chairperson; Honorary Secretary; Treasurer

5.3 The Steering Group shall have the right to co-opt, from time to time, such individuals as it deems necessary and also appoint such other Officers as it deems necessary.

5.4 All decisions shall be made by a majority of the members of the Steering Group at a vote held at a duly convened meeting of the Group. (Such a meeting should be notified to all members not less than 7 days prior to the meeting as opposed to a 14 day notification period for General Meetings).

5.5 The Steering Group shall make all decisions deemed necessary for the achievement of its aims and the running of the Forum.

5.6 The Steering Group shall not be affiliated to any political party

5.7 The Treasurer shall arrange for a Bank Account to be set up in the name of the Forum.

a) Funds of the Forum may be used to indemnify any liability costs or expense that may be incurred by the Steering Group in the lawful and proper administration of the Forum.

b) The Treasurer will be responsible for keeping a full and proper account of the Forum finances, with records of expenditure, receipts and invoices.

c) The Treasurer is not independently allowed to make financial decisions or transactions on behalf of the Forum. Authorisation of any and all financial decisions and transactions requires the signature of one other Steering Group Officer.

5.8 Forum members shall not receive any payment or benefit in kind for services rendered to the Forum.

5.9. The Steering Group will :

a) ensure all documents are stored safely digitally, password protected with access only eligible to Steering Group members. All personal details are likewise protected but only accessible by the Secretary who will maintain a register of members at all times and make it available to any Forum member or the public who requests it (in line with appropriate data protection protocols to protect personal data).

b) set up working groups, or sub-groups, with Terms of Reference to undertake tasks in furtherance of its objectives. In particular, working groups will be established to guide the development of a Neighbourhood Plan and to engage in the regeneration scheme for the Village. All such working groups must include at least one Steering Group member.

c) publicise and promote the work of the Forum via its website and social media networks together with organising meetings, training courses, events or seminars relevant to its work. Efforts will be taken to engage with all members of the community including 'hard to reach' groups, which may require bespoke forms of communication.

d) work with groups of complementary nature including other voluntary bodies,

charities, statutory, and non-statutory organisations who want to be affiliated with the Forum, and elected members; and to exchange information, advice and knowledge with them.

## **6. Membership**

6.1 Membership is open to all people aged 16 years and over who meet any one of the following criteria:

- a) who live or work in the Neighbourhood Area
- b) all business operators in the Neighbourhood Area. Business operators may nominate up to two people in their membership application, but they may only exercise one voting right at General and Annual General Meetings
- c) all constituted voluntary, community and statutory groups that operate in the Neighbourhood Area. Voluntary, community and statutory groups may nominate up to two people in their membership application, but they may only exercise one voting right at General and Annual General Meetings
- d) elected Bury Council members who represent wards in the Neighbourhood Area
- e) all members should declare any political, financial or personal interests

6.2 Members will apply for membership to the Forum Secretary, who shall have the right to accept members disregarding age, sex and ethnicity.

6.3 The Forum Committee may refuse membership, or may terminate or suspend the membership of any member by resolution passed at a Forum Steering Group meeting where it is considered membership would be detrimental to the Forum's objectives and activities

6.4 Any Forum member may resign from membership by providing the Forum Secretary with written notice

## **7. Meetings**

The Forum shall exist for 5 years from its formal designation by Bury Council, and at its AGM at the end of year 4 (2026) the Forum will give consideration to a continuing or successor organisation to maintain and monitor the Forum.

7.1 The Forum will hold an Annual General Meeting and at least one other meeting each year.

7.2 Meetings of the Forum will take place at times and in venues accessible by all members.

7.3 Members of the public will be welcome to attend meetings of the Forum as observers.

7.4 The Chair of the Forum, or in her/his absence the Vice-Chair, will preside. If neither is present the meeting will choose another of its members to preside.

7.5 The quorum for the Forum will be seven, including at least 4 resident members.

7.6. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be arranged between 11 and 15 months after the previous AGM. It shall give at least 14 days notice of the meeting and agenda to members via the Forum website and/or other appropriate means.

a) there must be a minimum of 14 members present at an AGM.

b) every member present has one vote.

7.7 At the AGM the Forum will receive a report from the Steering Group on its activities during the past year, including a Statement of income and expenditure together with a balance sheet for the previous year, ensuring financial transparency.

7.8 The Steering Group will retire at each AGM but may stand for re-election. Any full member of the Forum may stand for election to the Steering Group.

a) Re-election of Officers will be for:

a Chair, a Vice-Chair, Treasurer & Secretary

b) any other Officers it deems appropriate will be elected

c) if judged appropriate, confirm an organisation to act as agent for the Forum

d) review the membership representatives in respect of its demographic and geographical

profile

7.9 Decisions will be made by consensus. Should a consensus not be possible all members present may vote, except that a member who has a conflicting personal, family or financial interest may not preside, vote or participate in discussion. A simple majority on a show of hands will decide. In the event of a tie, the person presiding will have a second and casting vote.

7.10 Minutes of each meeting of the Forum will be publicly available in both electronic and printed form within 21 days of the meeting.

7.11 Changes to the constitution may only be agreed at the Forum Annual General Meeting or at a special Forum meeting convened for this purpose. Proposed changes must be set out with the notice of the meeting. A vote of two thirds majority of all Board members is required for a change. The person presiding does not have a second or casting vote in this instance.

## **8. Powers**

8.1 The Forum will endeavour to:

a) produce a Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of the community within the designated neighbourhood area

b) maintain a Neighbourhood Forum website and social media links

c) organise and hold open meetings or other equivalent events, including an AGM

d) raise money or apply for funding as necessary to support its aims

e) employ paid staff or recruit volunteers eg if independent consultants are deemed necessary to help the Forum

f) conduct research to further the needs of the Forum

g) carry out anything else that is deemed necessary, within the Law, to reach the Forum's aims and objectives

## **9. Dissolution**

9.1 In the event the Forum decides to dissolve, decided by a majority vote of those present and voting at a duly held Steering Group meeting, it shall then:

a) decide upon the disposal of any assets of the Forum

b) approve a final set of Accounts

c) upon completion of this the Group shall then be wound up

## **Appendix 1: Equal Opportunities Policy**

- Prestwich Village Neighbourhood Forum is committed to an inclusive neighbourhood plan, involving all social and cultural communities in Prestwich village neighbourhood.
- The Forum and Steering Group are committed to ensuring that in their working practices and attitudes they respect and celebrate the diversity of Prestwich village neighbourhood.
- The Forum will not discriminate on grounds of race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, disability, HIV status, age or against ex-offenders.
  
- The Forum recognises that it may need to offer different levels of support to different groups in order to achieve this.
- The Forum is committed to eliminating unfair discrimination from all aspects of its own operations including:
  - respecting social and cultural differences between fellow members
  - ensuring that the Forum and Steering Group reflect the community they serve
  - the needs of groups that are not represented within the Steering Group are considered and efforts are made to reach all groups and communities
  - administrative and housekeeping arrangements. e.g., the dates, times and venues used for meetings and use of language in leaflets
  - the Forum recognises that the implementation of this policy may require changes to current practice and is committed to this
  
- The Forum is committed to ensuring robust equal opportunities policies from the partners that it works with