

MARPLE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM CONSTITUTION – revised 8th October 2024

NAME AND AREA

1. The name of the group shall be the Marple Neighbourhood Forum hereinafter referred to as the “Forum”.
2. The Forum is as defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.
3. The Area covered by the Forum shall be as shown in the map at Annex A. The Area may be changed by the Forum Management Committee as it considers necessary subject to the approval of Stockport Borough Council.

PURPOSE

4. The primary Purposes of the Forum are:
 - Implementing and reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan which was adopted on 21st March 2024, in partnership with Stockport Council and other local stakeholders.
 - Promoting sustainable development and improving the social, economic and all aspects of the environmental well-being of the Area.
5. In undertaking its Primary Purposes the Forum will seek to address the following and any other relevant matters that come to its attention:
 - Protecting and enhancing the Area’s architectural heritage, its physical and environmental character, the natural environment including all open spaces, local businesses and the use of land for public purposes.
 - Encouraging the Members to participate fully in the activities of the Forum for the promotion and improvement of the Area.
 - Exercising powers which attach to the Forum such as Neighbourhood Development Orders, Community Right to Build Orders and the identification of Assets of Community Value.
 - Providing a forum for the discussion of issues such as land use and transport planning, local public services, local business, community facilities and open spaces.
 - Considering proposals by public or private sector bodies likely to have an impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Area.

PRINCIPLES

6. The following principles will inform the steps which the Forum will take towards the achievement of the above PURPOSE:
 - To act on the basis of equality and an acceptance of diversity and respect towards all persons irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, religious beliefs, physical or mental impairment, or any other attribute which may cause discrimination to arise.
 - Proactively to ensure that the Forum is as representative as possible of the population of the Area.

- To take into account the effects of climate change and the need for the sustainable use of resources.
- To support efforts to reduce crime.
- To ensure that action is taken in accordance with the Health and Safety Legislation and the principles that underpin it.
- To work with other Neighbourhood Forums that adjoin the boundary of the Area and to work with other Groups in the area who have similar purpose.

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

7. The Marple Neighbourhood Development Plan sets out the Forum's policies for the development and use of land within the Area including, where appropriate, conservation of the built and natural heritage.

8. The Plan has been subject to extensive consultation including the holding of a referendum within the Area, and will be subject to a review every 5 years

MEMBERSHIP OF THE FORUM

9. Membership of the Forum will be drawn, as far as is possible, from as wide a range of individuals and organisations as possible and will be open to:

- Residents living in the Area.
- Individuals who work in the Area (whether for business or on a regular voluntary basis).
- Ward Councillors who represent the Area and the Constituency Member of Parliament.
- Representatives of local resident associations, business forums, Churches, Schools, Charities and other similar groups or organisations as approved by the Management Committee or at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting. Such representatives will be Affiliate non-voting members of the Forum.
- Members of the Forum may resign their membership by writing to the Secretary.

10. The Forum shall have a minimum of 21 members before any decision on neighbourhood planning may be imposed or implemented. Members may join at an Annual General Meeting or by writing to the Secretary.

11. The Management Committee will maintain up to date lists of Members and Affiliated Members.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

12. The Forum shall be administered by a Management Committee of no less than five and no more than eight people all of whom will be members of the Forum.

13. The Management Committee will be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. Members of the Management Committee may be re-elected annually.

14. The Forum shall elect a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, and any other officers it deems necessary, annually from those persons who have been elected to the Management Committee.

15. Nominations for membership of the Management Committee must be received on the appropriate nomination paper at least 10 days prior to the Annual General Meeting.

POWERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

16. To maintain a register of Forum Members, Associate Members and other interested parties which shall include their name, address, telephone number and email address in compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, 1998 and any other laws, regulations and policies which relate to privacy of personal data.
17. To raise funds and receive donations to finance the work of the Forum and to open one or more bank accounts in the name of the Forum.
18. To publicise and promote the work of the Forum through regular Newsletters, a Forum website, and other relevant publicity.
19. To organise meetings, training courses, seminars and other events relevant to the work of the Forum.
20. To engage paid staff, volunteers and consultants to further the work of the Forum.
21. To work with other groups and organisations (statutory and non-statutory) to exchange information and expertise relevant to the Area.
22. To refuse, suspend or terminate membership and affiliate membership to any individual or group where it is considered that such membership is, or could be, detrimental to the purpose and principles of the Forum.
23. To take any lawful action which is deemed necessary to achieve the Forum's PURPOSES including entering into such contracts as seem appropriate.

MEETINGS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

24. The Management Committee shall meet at least four times a year (a year being 1 July to 30 June) to discuss actions, monitor progress and plan future work.
25. The Secretary will send out an Agenda by email (or postal address) to each member of the Committee at least seven days in advance of each meeting.
26. The Chairperson may call a meeting in an emergency in which case less than seven days' notice may be necessary.
27. Meetings will be quorate provided a minimum of 3 or 50% of the elected members, whichever is the greater are present. If a meeting is not quorate the matters on the agenda may be discussed but no decisions may be made until the meeting can be reconvened.
28. All meetings shall be chaired by the Chairperson or, in his or her absence, by a member of the Committee designated by him or her. Minutes of all meetings shall be prepared and circulated by the Secretary or another member of the Committee approved by the Committee.
29. Committee members shall declare any interest (financial or otherwise) which could be deemed to have an influence on the consideration of any matter being discussed by the Committee. All such declarations shall be shown in the minutes of the meeting and the member should abstain from voting in relation to the relevant items.

MEETINGS OF THE FORUM

30. All meetings shall be chaired by the Chairperson or, in his or her absence, by a member of the Committee designated by him or her. Minutes of all meetings shall be prepared and circulated by the Secretary or another member of the Committee approved by the Committee.

31. Open Meetings of the Forum shall be held at least once a year (a year being 1 July to 30 June) to which all individual and affiliate members shall be invited. Other interested people including advisors and representatives of Stockport Council may also attend.

32. The purpose of Open Meetings will be to inform members about the work of the Management Committee and to seek views about key matters. Any views expressed will not be binding on the Management Committee.

33. In addition to Open Meetings an Annual General Meeting shall take place no later than 30 September in each year at which annual accounts will be presented, a Management Committee for the following year will be elected and a report from the Management Committee will be presented. The Management Committee will determine what other items including resolutions, if any, are to be included.

34. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called by resolution of the Management Committee or by an application to the Secretary signed by not less than 50% of the members of the Forum. Such application to specify what matters are to be raised.

35. The Secretary shall send out an Agenda for an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting by email or post not less than 14 days before the meeting. Any member wishing to raise an item not included on the Agenda must notify the Secretary at least 7 days before the meeting. The Chairperson, in consultation with other members of the Committee, shall determine whether any such item will be raised or discussed.

36. All Forum members present are entitled to vote at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting. Voting shall be by a show of hands on a simple majority basis. In the event of a tied vote the Chairperson of the meeting shall make a final decision or decide to defer the item to a future meeting.

37. The quorum for an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting shall be ten members or 10% of the total number of registered members whichever is higher.

FINANCE

38. Any deeds, cheques and any other payments related to the Forum's bank accounts shall be signed by any two of the Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and one other Forum member appointed by the Management Committee for the purpose. Where electronic access to Bank accounts and payments is available the management Committee can at their discretion delegate authority to the Treasurer to operate the accounts and make payments on their sole signature.

39. All funds (other than a small petty cash float) raised by or on behalf of the Forum shall be deposited into one or other of the Forum's bank accounts.

40. All funds raised by or on behalf of the Forum shall be applied exclusively to the PURPOSES of the Forum.

41. Expenses incurred on behalf of the Forum may be reimbursed from the Forum's funds on the authorisation of the Chairperson. The recipient of expenses may not sign a cheque written for that purpose.

42. The Treasurer shall maintain a running account and produce an annual financial report to each Annual General Meeting having arranged for the accounts to be Independently Examined by a suitable person approved by the Management Committee for the purpose.

43. The Forum's accounting year shall run from 1 July to 30 June.

INDEMNITY

44. Officers and members of the Management Committee or any group set up by the Management Committee shall not be liable for any loss suffered by the Forum as a result of the discharge of their respective duties carried out on behalf of the Forum except such as arise from their own respective wilful default.

45. The forum may seek insurance cover, or other provision through the local authority or any independent institution, to protect its members and officers from any action that may arise from the legitimate exercise of the functions of the Forum.

ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

46. Changes to this Constitution shall only be made following a majority of those attending and eligible to vote at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting called in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 above.

DISSOLUTION

47. The Forum may be dissolved by:

- either a majority of those attending and eligible to vote at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting, or
- on a resolution of the Management Committee if membership of the Forum falls below the required minimum of 21 and is superseded by a qualifying body as outlined in the Localism Act, 2011

48. Any assets or remaining funds after all debts have been paid shall be returned to their providers or transferred to local charities or similar groups at the discretion of the Management Committee.

FORUM DURATION AND REVIEW

49. In accordance with the Act the Forum will cease to exist five years from the date of its formal designation. A Review of the functions and achievements of the Forum shall be carried out before the end of this period.

50. Following the Review and consultation with members, the Forum shall decide whether it wishes to dissolve itself or apply for a further 5 year designation (with or without amendments).