

Constitution of the Chapeltown Neighbourhood Forum

Our Constitution

The old, new, past, present, and future we all care about Chapeltown

1. Name
 - 1.1. The name of the organisation is the Chapeltown Neighbourhood Forum (“the Forum”). The forum is designated for a period of 5 years.
2. Purpose
 - 2.1. The purpose of the Forum is to promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well being of the neighbourhood area. It shall operate without distinction or discrimination on the grounds of gender, disability, sexual orientation, race, political, religious or other beliefs.
 - 2.2. The Forum will achieve this by:
 - a. actively encouraging all the Members to participate in the activities of the Forum for the promotion and improvement of the area
 - b. creating a Neighbourhood Plan, giving due recognition to the complementary relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan and any plan already adopted by any relevant local group and, in each case, taking account of applicable parts of those plans
 - c. considering the appropriateness and relevance to the area of taking advantage of the other rights afforded to forums under the Localism Act 2011 and supplementary regulations
 - d. supporting and improving cross border planning and processes in the area
 - e. collaborating with existing local groups in the neighbourhood area which are relevant to the Forum’s purpose and taking account of their interests, preferences and views
 - f. supporting projects and other activities that are of benefit to the area
 - g. Providing a forum for discussion of issues that may affect the cross-ward areas for generating ideas and proposals to enhance it.
3. Area
 - 3.1. The Forum shall cover the area shown in the attached map, subject to any amendment as may be agreed with Leeds City Council, acting in their capacity as the Local Planning Authority.
 - 3.2. The Chapeltown Community Forum’s area of interest includes land within the postcode districts of Leeds 7 & 8.
4. Membership
 - 4.1. Membership is open to all those who provide contact details for use by the Forum and who fall into one or more of the following categories:
 - a. all individuals who live in the area
 - b. all individuals who work in the area, whether for business carried on there or otherwise
 - c. all community organisations which operate in the area, through their duly appointed representatives (the term community organisation includes conservation societies, parks and special buildings or amenities user groups, charities, churches and other religious establishments, welfare organisations and other bodies which operate wholly or partly within the area and whose aims are consistent with the purpose of the Forum)
 - d. businesses, educational establishments or other entities which operate in the area, through their duly appointed representatives
 - e. Elected representatives from each local authority ward, the whole or part of which falls within the area, as ex officio members.

- f. Individuals who have a material and on-going social, cultural, economic or financial interest in or involvement in the area who support the purpose of the Forum and provide the Secretary with satisfactory evidence of eligibility.

4.2 The Steering Group may refuse to accept, or may revoke, membership of any individual or organisation which in its opinion fails to meet the criteria for membership or which acts in a way inimical to the forum's purpose. Any person or organisation whose membership is revoked shall have the right to appeal to a General Meeting of the Forum.

5. Steering Group

- 5.1. The day-to-day business of the Forum shall be conducted by the Neighbourhood Forum Steering Group ("the Steering Group"). Subject to decisions of any General Meeting, the Steering Group shall comprise up to 29 members elected by a General Meeting. The Forum shall strive for the Steering Group to reflect the diversity of people eligible for membership. In particular every effort shall be made to include:
 - a. at least one person aged under 30
 - b. members from local businesses
 - c. at least one person from each of the tenure groups: owner-occupier, tenant of the local authority or registered social landlord and private tenant
 - d. members who are women
 - e. members who are men
 - f. ethnic minority members
 - g. disabled members
 - h. at least two people from each of the wards which is included in whole or part within the forum
- 5.2. Councillors or others elected to public office for any part of the neighbourhood area shall not be eligible for election, but one from each ward which is included wholly or partly in the forum area may be co-opted to the Steering Group under paragraph 5.4
- 5.3. The term of office of any member of the Steering Group shall expire at each AGM and members shall be eligible to stand for re-election for up to a maximum of five years.
- 5.4. The Steering Group may co-opt up to five additional voting members for a term to expire no later than the following AGM. The power of co-option shall be used inter alia to ensure that as far as possible the Steering Group has a reasonable balance and reflects the local community.
- 5.5. The Steering Group shall elect from among its members a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Communication officer and other officers as it sees fit.
- 5.6. The Steering Group shall meet at least three times per year and five members (including at least one of the officers named in 5.) shall constitute a quorum.
- 5.7. The Steering Group may appoint groups to carry out specific roles or projects as it sees fit and shall co-opt such persons as necessary to enable any such group to perform its function.
- 5.8. Decisions of the Steering Group shall be by consensus or by a simple majority of those present. If required the Chair will have a casting vote.
- 5.9. The decision on the content of a proposed neighbourhood plan shall be subject to agreement at a General Meeting of the Membership.
- 5.10. The Steering Group shall record its proceedings which shall be publicly available.
- 5.11. Forum members who are not Steering Group members may request to attend Steering Group meetings through application to the Secretary. Permission to attend and speak will be granted at the discretion the Chair.

- 5.12. The Steering Group will elect the following officers of the Forum from its number:
Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and a Communication Officer
- 5.13. The Chair of the Forum Steering Group shall be responsible for:
- a. Chairing meetings of the Steering Group and General Meetings of the membership
 - b. Exercising a casting vote on elections and resolutions at meetings of the Forum and its Steering Group
 - c. Taking decisions on urgent matters between meetings of Steering Group which will be reported to the following meeting.
- 5.14. The Treasurer shall be responsible for:
- a. Establishing a bank account and acting as a joint signatory on the account with one other member of the Steering Group
 - b. Maintaining the Forums' financial records
 - c. Setting out a draft budget in the first year, and advising the Forum on staying within its budget
 - d. Preparing and presenting annual accounts, at the Forum's Annual General Meeting and arranging an independent examination of the accounts if the turnover exceeds £5,000
 - e. Providing a financial update at each meeting of the Steering Group.
- 5.15. The Secretary shall be responsible for:
- a. Calling and organising the Forum's Steering Group and General Meetings
 - b. Ensuring the provision of a record of Forum meetings and making these publicly available
 - c. Maintaining a register of Forum members.
- 5.16. The Communication Officer shall be responsible for:
- a. Maintaining and updating the Chapeltown Forum website
 - b. Preparing and presenting draft materials for the promotion of Chapeltown Forum, through its organised events and activities, and for promotion in the neighbourhood area e.g. posters and leaflets
 - c. Communicating with the local media including, local papers.
 - d. Promoting and advertising Chapeltown Forum via social media e.g. Twitter & Facebook
6. Steering Group Code of conduct
- 6.1. The role of the Steering Group is to conduct the day to day business of the Forum in an efficient, fair and responsive way. In taking decisions on behalf of the Forum, Steering Group members must always be aware of their responsibility to all those living and working in the Forum area.
- 6.2. All Steering Group members must comply with this constitution and code of conduct at all times.
- 6.3. Steering Group members should conduct themselves in a manner which respects the views of others. Racist, sexist, personalised or inflammatory comments are not acceptable.
- 6.4. Steering Group members must abide by collective decisions made and always represent the Forum in a positive manner.
- 6.5. Steering Group members must never use their position to seek preferential treatment for themselves, relatives or members of their household. Any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests must be declared at Steering Group meetings.
- 6.6. Steering Group members cannot receive any payment from the Forum, other than for bona fide expenses as approved by the Treasurer and submitted and recorded in writing.
7. General Meetings
- 7.1. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of all members shall be the controlling body of the Forum.

- 7.2. An AGM shall be held on a day to be appointed by the Steering Group not later than three months after the end of the Forum's financial year.
 - 7.3. The business of the AGM shall include:
 - a. a report from the Chair on the activities of the Forum since the previous AGM and its plans for the forthcoming year
 - b. a report from the Treasurer as to the financial position of the Forum
 - c. consideration of and, if thought fit, approval of the accounts of the Forum for the previous financial year together with an independent examination of those accounts if the turnover exceeds £5,000 for the relevant year
 - d. appointment of an independent examiner to report to the following AGM on the accounts for the current financial year if the turnover is forecast to exceed £5,000 for the relevant year
 - e. consideration of any motion which has been submitted by at least 10 members of the Forum in time for circulation with the notice of the AGM
 - f. election of the Steering Group for the forthcoming year
 - g. Any other business as required by the Constitution or as directed by the Steering Group.
 - 7.4. The Secretary shall give all members at least 21 days written notice of the time and place of the AGM. Such notice shall include details of all business to be transacted at the meeting.
 - 7.5. Nominations for election to the Steering Group shall be invited in advance of the AGM and must be proposed and seconded in writing by members with the signed consent of the candidate. Nominations shall be duly submitted to the Secretary of the Forum not less than 3 days prior to the date of the AGM.
 - 7.6. Election of members of the Steering Group may be taken by a show of hands of members or if requested by a majority of those members present by a ballot of those present at the AGM. Voting shall be by ranking the candidates in order of preference and shall be counted by the Single Transferable Vote method. The meeting shall agree to the appointment of one or more scrutineers to act as returning officers and to advise the Chair on the results.
 - 7.7. A member shall be entitled to appoint a proxy to vote on his or her behalf. Notice of appointment of a proxy must be received by the Secretary not less than 24 hours before the meeting.
 - 7.8. The AGM may, by a vote of not less than two-thirds of those members present, agree to consider any urgent or important business which has arisen since dispatch of the notice of the meeting.
 - 7.9. The Steering Group shall have power to call a General Meeting as necessary (for example to approve a draft Plan).
 - 7.10. Other General Meetings of all members shall be called within 28 days of receipt by the Secretary of a request in writing signed by no less than 21 members, stating the purpose for which the meeting is required or when directed by the Steering Group.
 - 7.11. 21 members (or one-fifth of the membership if fewer) shall constitute a quorum at a General Meeting.
 - 7.12. Voting at General Meetings shall be by show of hands of members, except as provided in paragraph 6.f. for election of Steering Group members
 - 7.13. A record of each General Meeting shall be produced and made publicly available.
 - 7.14. Conflicts of interest must be declared. Members with a conflict of interest should withdraw from discussion and voting on the issue in question.
8. Finance
- 8.1. The Forum's accounting period shall be annual, ending twelve months after its inaugural AGM.

- 8.2. Accounting records shall be maintained for a period of six years. On winding up the Forum such records shall be kept for two years. Records shall be available for inspection by any member on giving not less than 10 days' notice.
- 8.3. The Forum shall open and maintain a bank or other appropriate account in the name of the Forum which shall be controlled by a mandate requiring the signature of the Treasurer and one other Steering Group member.
- 8.4. The Forum's accounts shall be made publicly available within three months of the Forum's financial year end.
- 8.5. The Forum may raise funds by donation, grants, or other means to be used in furtherance of the Forum's purpose.

9. Constitution and Interpretation

- 9.1. In the event of any question arising where the interpretation of this Constitution is in doubt or where it is silent, the Steering Group shall have the power to act according to its own interpretation and at its discretion.
- 9.2. Other than as may be required by law, amendments to this Constitution may only be made by a majority representing at least two-thirds of the members present and voting at a quorate General Meeting.
- 9.3. Any requirement in this Constitution for notices or reports to be distributed to members of the Forum shall be deemed to have been satisfied if such notice or reports have been sent to all members by e mail, by posting on the Forum's website or by other electronic means. An individual member may request hard copies and in such a case the Steering Group reserves the right to make a charge to cover the extra cost incurred, with appropriate dispensation and regard for disability requirements.

10. Term

- 10.1. The duration of the Forum shall be for five years from the date of adoption of this Constitution unless it is previously wound up or extended by resolution at a General Meeting.
- 10.2. In the event of dissolution of the Forum any remaining assets shall be distributed to the community organisations which remain as members at that date in proportions to be decided by the Steering Group, which shall retain responsibility for completing such distribution for a period ending six months from the date of dissolution.