



DEFINITIONS

Name

1. The name of the community forum shall be North Willesborough Community Forum (NWCF).

Area

2. The NWCF shall cover the area shown on the map in Appendix 1.
3. The Area may be amended by NWCF from time to time, subject to agreement at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting, or as adjusted by Ashford Borough Council under its statutory powers.

Community

4. The Community includes all residents of the NWCF Area.

OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS

5. The objectives and functions of NWCF shall be:
 - To represent the needs and aspirations of the Community.
 - To work with and lobby private, statutory and voluntary bodies to take any action as appropriate.
 - To promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Community.
 - To be a means whereby the Community is able to voice opinions on local matters which affect their lives and wellbeing.
 - To promote community spirit.
 - To raise money and other resources necessary for fulfilment of the above, and to do anything else intended or likely to further the above.
6. NWCF shall be non-party in politics and non-sectarian.

MEMBERSHIP

7. Membership of NWCF is open to all Residents and Stakeholders within the Area. For the purposes of this Constitution the following apply:
 - A Resident is a person who is registered as a local government elector at an address in the Area.
 - Properly constituted groups with a legitimate interest in the Area including but not limited to tenants associations, community associations, WI, Neighbourhood Watch coordinators, churches, schools, and businesses may apply to be Stakeholder members and shall appoint one individual (and alternates) to represent them at meetings.
8. Membership of NWCF is open to all elected Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council councillors whose wards are all or partly within the Area, or whose portfolio includes responsibility for community engagement or governance.
9. Individuals who do not qualify as Members but who are (i) living in the Area and are not on the electoral register, or (ii) living in other parts of Ashford Borough or (iii) wanting to live in the Area, are welcome to attend Open Meetings but may not vote.
10. Groups wishing to become Stakeholder members may apply in writing to NWCF at any time, for consideration.



11. No fee or subscription will be charged for membership.

STEERING COMMITTEE

12. Members shall elect, at the Annual General Meeting, a Steering Committee (Steerco) of up to 16 members to manage the business of NWCF.
13. The Steerco shall consist of at least a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.
14. Elected Members of the Steerco must qualify as Resident members of NWCF and must be aged 18 or more.
15. An office holder resigning from the Steerco may be replaced on the Steerco by the majority of the remaining Steerco members agreeing to his/her appointment. He/she will remain in office until the next Annual General Meeting at which there is an election of officers.
16. At least 4 members of the Steerco must be present in order to take a decision on behalf of NWCF. NWCF and Steerco aim to work by consensus but where this is not possible, decisions will be taken by majority vote (other than changes to this Constitution).
17. Standing Orders may be made by the Steerco for all matters not set out in this Constitution.
18. The Steerco shall have the power to co-opt an individual or individuals to serve as a member of the Steerco.
19. The Steerco shall have the power to approve the formation and continuance of sub-groups.
20. The Steerco will receive and consider reports from relevant sub-groups, project groups and panels.
21. In case of doubt the Steerco shall determine whether any organisation is a Stakeholder Member for the purpose of this Constitution.
22. The Steerco will decide on any dispute regarding this Constitution or any Standing Order.

MEETINGS

23. The NWCF will be promoted widely and hold regular meetings. It will be as democratic and open about its business as possible.

Steerco Meetings

24. The Steerco shall meet regularly to ensure smooth running of NWCF.
25. The Steerco may invite local Councillors, advisors, professionals and members of the public to address or attend meetings of the Steerco, depending on the matter to be discussed. Such individuals are not allowed to vote but can support and advise the Steerco.
26. Steerco meetings will be minuted and the minutes distributed to all Steerco members and other attendees.



Open Meetings

27. Open meetings (which all members of the Community may attend) shall be held four times a year.
28. The purpose and content of the Open Meeting is as follows:
- To inform the Community on such matters as:
 - Policing and crime.
 - NWCF activities and plans.
 - Ashford Borough Council/Kent County Council activities and plans.
 - Local planning applications.
 - To discuss issues of interest and/or concern to the Community.
 - There will also usually be a guest speaker.
29. Local Councillors will be expected to attend. Additionally, advisors, professionals and members of the public may be invited to address or attend Open Meetings, depending on the matter to be discussed. Such individuals are not allowed to vote but can support and advise.
30. A record of each Open Meeting shall be published.

Annual General Meeting

31. Once each year NWCF shall hold an Annual General Meeting (usually as part of an Open Meeting).
32. Written notice of the AGM will be advertised within the Community Area. In an election year an opportunity to nominate people to office on the Steerco will also be advertised.
33. At the AGM the existing Steerco will present:
- A report of NWCF's activities for the past year
 - Accounts for the year.
 - Arrangements for independent examination of yearly accounts.
34. Every three years there will be an election of officers and other members of the Steerco, each to hold office for a period of three years.
35. In an election year the existing Steerco will stand down after making its report.
36. The officers and Steerco will be elected by the members present at the AGM in accordance with Standing Orders. Any existing Steerco member may stand for re-election.
37. If nobody is willing to stand for election, the Steerco will decide whether to start procedures to conclude the operation of the NWCF. It is the responsibility of the existing Steerco to recruit a new Steerco or dissolve the NWCF.
38. Any amendments to the constitution must be made at the Annual General Meeting and must be agreed by two thirds of the members present. At least 50 NWCF members must be present at the AGM for any vote to be valid.



DISSOLUTION

39. The NWCF may only be dissolved at a public meeting where the future of the NWCF has been clearly publicised on the agenda in advance of the meeting.
40. A proposal to dissolve the NWCF will only be carried if agreed by 50 of the members present or if the NWCF is unable to form a Steerco.
41. On dissolution the funds and assets of NWCF will be distributed as follows:
 - Unspent funds from grants and donations will be returned to the funding organisation or donor.
 - Unspent funds and assets attributed to formally constituted subgroups will be offered to those groups if they decide to continue as a separate organisation.
 - Any residual funds and assets will be distributed to local charitable or voluntary groups at the discretion of the Steerco.

FINANCE

42. NWCF can raise money as it sees fit so long as it is spent in line with NWCF's Objectives and Functions.
43. NWCF is not permitted to take out loans or overdrafts of any kind, nor to operate at a deficit.
44. NWCF will open one or more bank accounts in the name of NWCF.
45. Cheques must be signed by two approved signatories. Electronic payments must be approved by two authorised approvers.
46. Signatories and authorised approvers must not be from the same household or related to each other.
47. The Treasurer will keep financial records and ensure auditing of yearly accounts.

OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

48. NWCF is open to Residents and Stakeholders in the Community Area whatever their background or experience.
49. All participants shall act in the best interests of NWCF and the residents of the Area and shall follow the good governance guidelines set out in the Good Governance Code:

<http://www.goodgovernancecode.org.uk>

50. Remarks or behaviour that cause offence or make people feel unwelcome will be challenged.
51. NWCF will do its best to overcome any obstacles to people giving their view or getting involved in NWCF.



APPENDIX 1 - NWCF AREA

