

CONSTITUTION

NAME

The name of the Community forum will be Kennington Community Forum (“KCF”)

OBJECTS AND FUNCTIONS

1. The Objects and Functions of Kennington Community Forum will be:
 - 1.1. To find out and represent the needs and aspirations of the community in the neighbourhood area represented (“the Community”);
 - 1.2. To promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Community;
 - 1.3. To lobby and work with private, statutory and voluntary bodies to take any action as appropriate;
 - 1.4. To promote community spirit and quality of life within the Community;
 - 1.5. To be a means whereby the Community is able to voice opinions on local matters which affect their lives and well-being;
 - 1.6. To raise and hold money and other resources necessary for fulfilment of these Objectives and Functions, including grant funding;
 - 1.7. To be non-party in politics and non-sectarian;
 - 1.8. To do anything intended or likely to further the above.

AREA

2. The area represented shall be the area shown as Kennington in Ashford Borough Council’s Local Plan Policies Map (“the Area”). An indicative plan is attached at Annex A.
3. The Area may be amended by the Forum 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.

STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

4. KCF is an unincorporated association, and is a voluntary not-for-profit group which does not distribute any surplus to its members.
5. Membership of KCF is open to all Residents and Stakeholders within the Area. For the purposes of this Constitution the following apply:
 - 5.1. A Resident is a person who is registered as a local government elector at an address in the Area.
 - 5.2. 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.
6. Membership of KCF 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.

7. Residents can join as Members at any KCF public meeting by signing an attendance register (which includes their contact details) or by contacting the Chair or Secretary. KCF will maintain a register of Members, and may at its discretion take steps to verify that Members are on the local electoral register.
8. 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 public meetings as participants.
9. Groups wishing to become Stakeholder members may apply in writing to KCF at any time, for consideration.
10. No membership fee or subscription will be charged for membership.

CORE GROUP

11. Members will elect at the Annual General Meeting a working committee of up to 12 members to manage the business of KCF, to be known as Kennington Core Group. The Core Group will consist of at least a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.
12. Elected Members of the Core Group must qualify as Resident or Stakeholder members of KCF. Any Resident or Stakeholder Member over the age 18 can stand for election to the Core Group
13. Core Group members shall sign a Members Register on election.
14. At least 4 members of the Core Group must be present in order to take a decision on behalf of KCF. KCF and Core Group aim to work by consensus but where this is not possible, decisions will be taken by majority vote (other than changes to this Constitution).
15. Standing Orders may be made by the Core Group for all matters not set out in this Constitution.
16. The Core Group shall have the power to co-opt an individual or individuals to serve as a member of the Core Group.
17. The Core Group shall have the power to approve the formation and continuance of sub-groups.
18. The Core Group will receive and consider reports from relevant sub-groups, project groups and panels.
19. In case of doubt the Core Group shall determine whether any organisation is a Stakeholder Member for the purpose of this Constitution.
20. The Core Group may invite local Councillors, advisors, professionals and members of the public to address or attend meetings of KCF and the Core Group, depending on the matter to be discussed. Such individuals are not allowed to vote but can support and advise KCF and the Core Group.
21. The Core Group will decide on any dispute regarding this Constitution or any Standing Order.

ORDINARY MEETINGS

22. KCF will be promoted widely within the Community area and hold regular public meetings. It will be as democratic and open about its business as possible. It will keep written records and minutes of all meetings. The minutes will be presented to the next meeting for approval. Any resident of the Area has the right to see any minutes of KCF and Core Group meetings.

23. Where a vote is held at a public meeting the outcome shall normally be determined as a simple majority by a show of hands of all present. Exceptionally, where the issue to be determined is subject to regulations under the Localism Act 2011 and related legislation including but not limited to The Right to Build, The Right to Challenge, The Right to Bid and Neighbourhood Planning, and formal evidence is required, KCF shall reserve the right to restrict voting to participants who are Resident Members. Participants will be notified before such a vote is taken.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

24. Once each year KCF will hold an Annual General Meeting.
25. Written notice and an opportunity to nominate people to office on the Core Group will be advertised within the Community area.
26. At this meeting the existing Core Group will present a report of KCF's activities including accounts for the year, and stand down at its conclusion.
27. The officers and Core Group for the next year will be elected by the members present at the AGM in accordance with Standing Orders. Any existing Core Group member may stand for re-election.
28. Arrangements for independent examination of yearly accounts prepared by the Treasurer will be advised at the AGM
29. Any amendments to this constitution must be made either at the Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary General Meeting called by a minimum of ten residents and must be agreed by two thirds of the members present.
30. If nobody is willing to stand for election, the Core Group will decide whether to start procedures to conclude the operation of KCF. It is the responsibility of the existing Core Group to recruit a new Core Group or dissolve KCF.

DISSOLUTION

31. KCF may only be dissolved at a public meeting where the future of KCF has been clearly publicised on the agenda in advance of the meeting. A proposal to dissolve KCF will only be carried if KCF is unable to form a Core Group.
32. On dissolution the funds and assets of KCF will be distributed as follows:
- 32.1. unspent funds from grants and donations will be returned to the funding organisation or donor
 - 32.2. unspent funds and assets attributed to formally constituted subgroups will be offered to those groups if they decide to continue as a separate organisation (for example, Kennington Summer Fayre)
 - 32.3. any residual funds and assets will be distributed to local charitable or voluntary groups at the discretion of the Core Group

FINANCE

33. The Core Group can raise money as it sees fit so long as it is spent in line with KCF's Objects and Functions. The Core Group is not permitted to take out loans or overdrafts of any kind, nor to operate at a deficit.
34. The Treasurer, under direction of the Core Group, will open one or more bank accounts in the name of KCF.

35. Cheques must be signed by two approved signatories. Electronic payments must be approved by two authorised approvers. Signatories and authorised approvers must not be from the same household or related to each other. The treasurer will keep any petty cash and financial records.
36. The Core Group must ensure independent examination of yearly accounts prepared by the Treasurer.

OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

37. KCF is open to Residents and Stakeholders in the Community Area whatever their background or experience. All participants shall act in the best interests of KCF 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>). Remarks or behaviour that cause offence or make people feel unwelcome will be challenged. KCF will do its best to overcome any obstacles to people giving their view or getting involved in KCF.