



## **Constitution of PlanWimbledon**

(formerly known as **Wimbledon Neighbourhood Planning Group**)

The name of the Group shall be **PlanWimbledon**

### **1. DEFINITIONS:**

In this document certain word(s) shall have the meaning ascribed to them as below:

1.1 "**Group**" means PlanWimbledon (formerly known as the Wimbledon Neighbourhood Planning Group).

1.2 "**Neighbourhood Plan**" and "**Neighbourhood Forum**" have the meanings ascribed to them in the Localism Act 2011, Schedule 9 Neighbourhood Planning.

1.3 "**The Wimbledon Area**" and "**Area**" is the proposed area for which the Group will develop a Neighbourhood Plan post designation.

1.4 "**General Meeting**" is a meeting of members properly arranged as described in this constitution.

1.5 "**Conflicts of interest**" A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual has competing interests or loyalties because of their duties to more than one person or organisation.

### **2. OBJECTIVES:**

2.1 The Group is established with the key objective to form an authorised Neighbourhood Forum which would prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Wimbledon Area. The aims of this are:

- To promote / improve the balance of the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of the Area

- To ensure full community involvement, from all sections of the community.
- To provide opportunities for local people to inform and influence local decisions.
- To improve democratic participation by local people.
- To establish all necessary sub-groups to enable progress on and completion of all sections of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- To make necessary arrangements for the publication of the Neighbourhood Plan, including publicising the Plan.
- To liaise with the Local Authority, its relevant Committees, and its representatives on preparation of specific aspects of the Plan.
- To establish a process to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Plan

### **3. AFFILIATIONS, OPERATIONS, AND INDEPENDENCE:**

3.1 The Group shall be politically independent.

3.2 All members of the Group shall act in the best interests of the Group and the Area and shall follow the good governance guidelines set out in the attached guidance (and any subsequent updates): <http://www.goodgovernancecode.org.uk>.

3.3 The Group shall also act in accordance with best practice in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and in accordance with Government guidance for such preparation and shall seek to work collaboratively with the Local Planning Authority to achieve this.

### **4. MEMBERSHIP:**

4.1 Membership of the Group shall be open to all who are interested in actively furthering the purposes of the Group, specifically, those who live or work in the Wimbledon Area. The composition of the Membership should reflect the scope and character of the geographical Area covered by the Group and also the different sections of the community. The Group shall operate without distinction or discrimination on the grounds of sex, disability, sexual orientation, race, or of political, religious, or other opinions.

4.2 A Member is someone who has provided the necessary information to the Secretary and has been accepted as a Member to attend General Meetings, by submitting satisfactory evidence of eligibility along with contact details which may be used by the Group for its lawful purposes.

Only members over the age of 18 are permitted to vote at Meetings. Members must declare any conflicts of interest. An individual can only exercise one vote. There shall be a minimum of 21 Members.

4.3 Full Membership shall be open to:

- i. individuals who live in the area.
- ii. individuals who work in the area.
- iii. community organisations which operate in the area, through their duly nominated and appointed representative.

iv. businesses, educational establishments or other entities which operate in the area, through their duly nominated and appointed representative.

4.4 Associate Membership shall be open to:

i. individuals who are elected members of Merton Council, any part of whose area falls within the Area.

ii. organisations of residents and businesses may join as Associate Members.

iii. associate members will be ex officio members i.e. attending but non-voting members

4.5 New members may join by applying via the website.

4.6 The decision to accept an application of new individual membership is the responsibility of the Officers, to be determined by majority vote. Refusal to accept an application for membership must be given to the applicant, along with a full and valid reason.

4.7 The Secretary shall be responsible for the maintenance of an up-to-date list of membership.

4.8 Lists of members and contact details are the sole ownership of the Group.

## **5. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE:**

The Group has the right not to accept an individual or organisation into Membership and may terminate the Membership of any Member whose behaviour is not in the best interests of the Group. Any such decision to terminate a Membership shall be taken by the Steering Committee and there shall be a right of appeal at a General Meeting.

## **6. STEERING COMMITTEE:**

6.1 The Steering Committee shall consist of all Officers and not more than eight other Members, at least one of whom must be representative of business interests in the Area and shall be responsible for running the affairs of the Group and may take decisions on its behalf. A decision to consult or to submit a Neighbourhood Plan shall be taken by a General Meeting.

6.2 A quorum for Meetings of the Steering Committee shall consist of five Members, one of whom must be an Officer. In the event of an equality in the votes cast on any issue to be decided, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote. In the event that the Chair (and Vice Chair) are not able to attend a Meeting of the Steering Committee, its Members shall agree a Chair for the Meeting.

6.3 Nominations for election to the Steering Committee shall be made at or before the Annual General Meeting. They must be supported by a seconder and require the consent of the proposed nominee. If the nominations exceed the number of vacancies, a ballot shall take place in such manner as the Chair of the Meeting may direct.

6.4 The Steering Committee shall have the power to co-opt further members (who shall attend in an advisory and non-voting capacity). The consent of the proposed nominee must first have been obtained.

## **7. OFFICERS:**

7.1 The Group will include the following official positions, hereinafter referred to as “the Officers”, with the roles set out below: Chair, Secretary and Treasurer to be elected annually by simple majority vote.

7.2 The Officers’ role descriptions are as follows:

### **i. Chair.**

- Shall be the principal presiding officer and chairperson for the Group and meetings.
- Shall possess a casting vote on occasions where voting is tied.
- Shall lead the Group in all communication and business with external organisations and individuals, including being the Forum’s spokesperson.
- Shall have the power to take urgent decisions for the interim in between meetings on the Group. These will then be reviewed at the next Forum meeting.
- Shall enforce the Constitution.

### **ii. Secretary:**

- Shall be responsible for maintaining all records and notes.
- Shall be responsible for all correspondence with Group members.
- Shall be responsible for maintaining an up-to-date list of members.

### **iii. Treasurer:**

- Shall be responsible for keeping all budgeting records.
- Shall be responsible for monitoring expenditure.
- Shall be responsible for the publication of a statement of accounts.
- Shall be responsible for applying for available grants.

Officers shall be determined from time to time at a General Meeting of the Group.

7.3 Nominations for the election of Officers shall be made at, or before, the Annual General Meeting. Such nominations shall be supported by a seconder and require the consent of the proposed nominee who must be present at the General Meeting. The election of Officers shall be completed prior to the election of Members to form the Steering Committee.

7.4 All Officers and Steering Group members shall relinquish their office every year and shall be eligible for re-election at the Annual General Meeting. If a vacancy is not filled at a General Meeting or becomes vacant during the course of the year, the Steering Committee shall have the power to elect a Member, or Members, to fill such position(s). The consent of the proposed nominee must first have been obtained.

7.5 The Officers may co-opt further officers to assist them in carrying out their duties. These co-opted officers should have clear, agreed job descriptions.

7.6 The Steering Group will elect a Vice Chair from amongst their number.

## **8. GENERAL MEETINGS:**

8.1 An Annual General Meeting shall be held each year to receive and approve the Steering Committee's report, the audited accounts and to elect Officers and other Members to form the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall decide when General and other Meetings of the Group shall be held and shall give at least 14 days' notice of such meetings to all Members. The Secretary shall compile the minutes of such Meetings which will be made available to all Members, after approval by the Steering Committee.

8.2 Ten Members, personally present, including at least one of the Officers of the Group, shall constitute a quorum for a General Meeting of the Group.

8.3 Meetings can take place either in person or online.

## **9. FINANCES:**

9.1 The Group may raise such funds as may be necessary to carry out its activities, from donations, grants and other appropriate sources. The Group shall have its own Bank Account post designation. The Group will not own any premises.

9.2 The Officers of the Group, on behalf of the Steering Committee shall, out of monies received by the Group, pay all proper expenses of administration and management of the Group. After the payment of the administration and management expenses and the setting aside to reserve of such sums as may be deemed expedient, the remaining funds of the Group shall be applied, by the Steering Committee, in furtherance of the purposes of the Group.

9.3 The Treasurer will present an annual report of income and expenditure to the Annual General Meeting.

## **10. CONFLICT RESOLUTION WITHIN THE GROUP:**

At all times, the Group will recognise the primary need to encourage community involvement in, and support for, the Neighbourhood Plan. If it proves not possible for the Group to reach agreement during any stage of preparing the Plan, every effort shall be made by the membership of the Forum to resolve the difference by negotiation. Where this does not resolve the situation, the Group will ensure that the alternative view is included in the relevant stage of community engagement.

## **11. CONFIDENTIALITY:**

It is understood, and agreed to, that the disclosure of confidential information may provide certain information that is, and must be kept, confidential. To ensure the protection of such information and to preserve any confidentiality necessary, it is agreed that all committee members will adhere to the specific confidentiality guidance notes which will be issues by the Steering Group from time-to-time.

## **12. AMENDMENTS:**

The terms of this Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds of Members present voting in favour at a General Meeting, provided that 14 days' notice of the proposed amendment has been given to all Members.

## **13. NOTICES:**

Any notice required to be given by these Rules shall be deemed to be duly given if left at, sent by prepaid post, addressed, or emailed to the address of that Member, last notified to the Secretary

## **14. DURATION:**

When designated as a Neighbourhood Forum, the Group shall endure for five years unless renewed. If the group wishes to renew then prior notice of at least one year should be given.

## **15. DISSOLUTION:**

In the event of the winding-up of the Group, the available funds of the Group shall be transferred to such one or more bodies having objects similar, or reasonably similar, to those herein before declared as may be chosen by the Steering Committee and approved by the Meeting of the Group at which the decision to dissolve the Group is confirmed.

**January 2021**