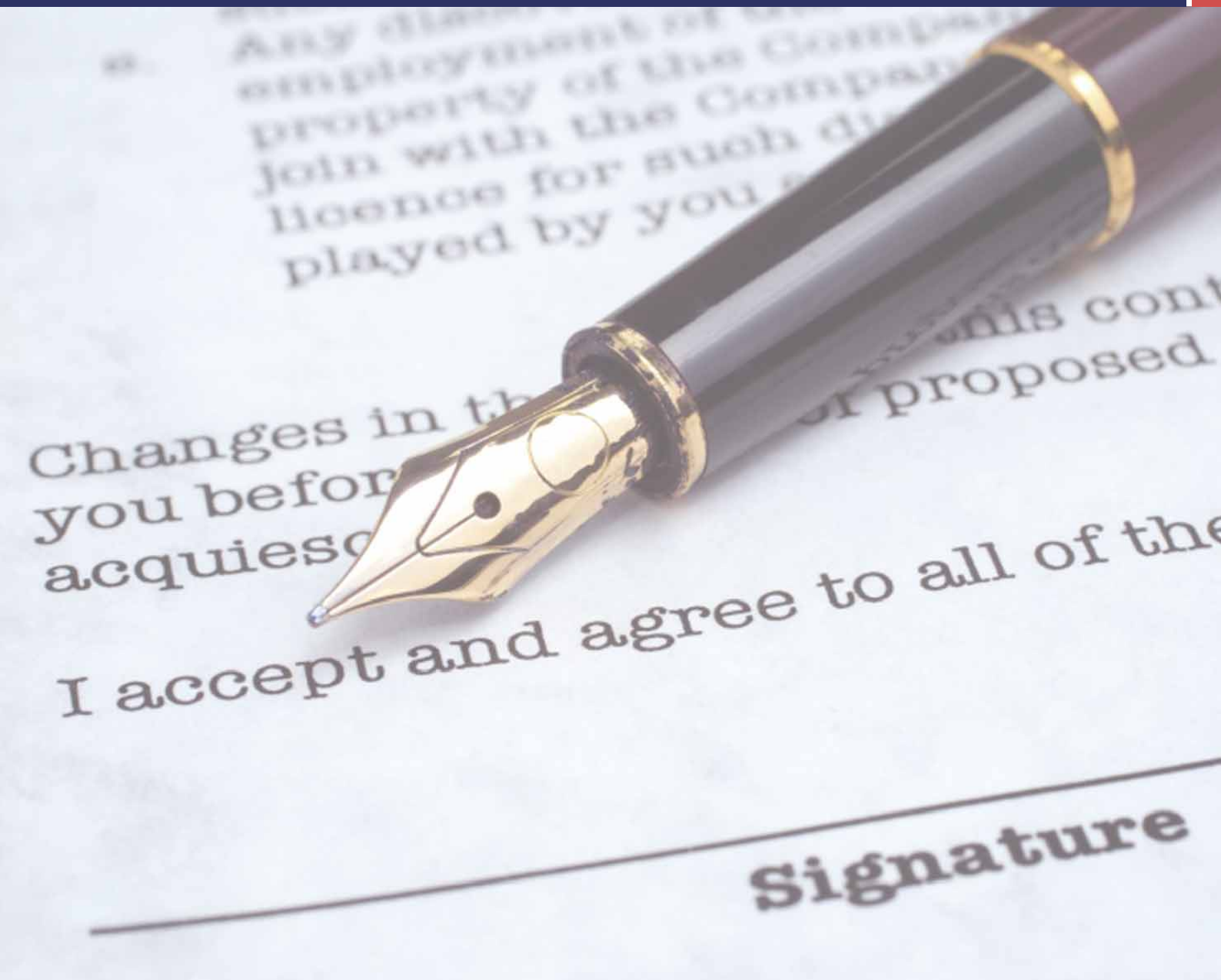




## How to complete your first constitution



LOTTERY FUNDED



PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

## How to complete your first constitution

Every voluntary group / charity has a Constitution. Your Constitution (sometimes called the governing document) outlines key basic rules and principles which you must follow. The purpose of the Constitution is to show key people, for example the bank, funders or the contributing public, how you are accountable and how funds are safeguarded.

If you choose charitable aims for your voluntary group, and it is for the public benefit, it will automatically become a charity once it has been agreed and signed by the committee members. There is no need to register with the Charity Commission until the charity's income goes over £5,000 a year. But you will be able to apply directly to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for tax relief.

**This is an example of a constitution. View our guide to completing your first constitution for all the tips you need. If you'd like a Word version please contact us on 0845 389 0389 or [info@communityimpactbucks.org.uk](mailto:info@communityimpactbucks.org.uk).**

### 1. Name

It is a good idea to check the **Community Impact Bucks Search Directory** to make sure the name of your group is not too similar to an existing voluntary group.

### 2. Aims

The wording of your aims is very important. You are only allowed to use the charity's resources to further the aims so they need to be broad enough to cover all the activities you have planned but also specific enough that the community and funders know what you are trying to achieve.

*For example – if you plan to run afternoon tea dances for the elderly in Wendover you could have the aim: 'To reduce the isolation of the elderly living in the Wendover area of Bucks.'*

### 3. Powers

The powers are the actions the committee can do in order to further the aims.

### 4. Membership

Voluntary groups are usually 'membership organisations'. This is because they are accountable to their members who get together 'officially' every year at the AGM. At this meeting they are told what activities the organisation has done, how money has been spent and may ask appropriate questions. They then vote in the committee members for the next year.



## 5. Management

1. You will need a minimum of 3 committee members to manage the organisation (See sample constitution section 5a)
2. Funders would normally expect the committee to meet at least 3 times a year. This is a minimum number of meetings you might meet every week in reality! (See sample constitution section 5c)
3. The 'quorum' is the number of committee members who need to be present for a committee meeting to count and make decisions. (See sample constitution section 5e)
4. Annual General Meeting (AGM) notice will tell the members when & where the meeting will be held and what will be decided at the meeting. (See sample constitution section 8)

## APPENDIX

### Sample constitution for neighbourhood groups

#### CONSTITUTION OF:

ADOPTED ON: (Day/Month/Year)

#### 1 Name

The name of the Group shall be

#### 2 Aims

The aims of the Group shall be to:

#### 3 Powers

In order to achieve its aims the Group may:

1. Raise money
2. Open bank accounts
3. Take out insurance
4. Employ staff
5. Acquire and manage buildings
6. Organise courses and events
7. Work with other groups and exchange information
8. Do anything that is lawful which will help it to fulfil its aims



## 4 Membership

- (a) Membership of the Group shall be open to any person over 18 or any organisation living or located in the \_\_\_\_\_ area who is interested in helping the Group to achieve its aims, willing to abide by the rules of the Group and willing to pay any subscription agreed by the Management Committee.*
- (b) Membership shall be available to anyone without regard to gender, race, nationality, disability, sexual preference, religion or belief.*
- (c) Every individual member and each organisation shall have one vote at General Meetings.*
- (d) The membership of any member may be terminated for good reason by the Management Committee but the member has a right to be heard by the Management Committee before a final decision is made.*
- (e) Each member organisation shall appoint a representative to attend meetings of the Group and notify the Group's Secretary of that person's name.*

## 5 Management

- (a) The Group shall be administered by a Management Committee of the Officers and not more than \_\_\_\_ other members elected at the Group's Annual General Meeting (AGM).*
- (b) The Officers of the Management Committee shall be: the Chairperson, the Treasurer and the Secretary.*
- (c) The Management Committee shall meet at least \_\_\_\_ times a year.*
- (d) The Chairperson shall Chair all meetings of the Group.*
- (e) The quorum for Management Committee meetings shall be \_\_\_\_ members.*
- (f) Voting at Management Committee meetings shall be by show of hands. If there is a tied vote then the Chairperson shall have a second vote.*
- (g) The Management Committee may by a two-thirds majority vote and for a good and proper reason remove any Committee member, provided that person has the right to be heard before a final decision is made.*
- (h) The Management Committee may appoint another member of the Group as a Committee member to fill a vacancy provided the maximum number is not exceeded.*



## 6 Duties of the Officers

### (a) The duties of the Chairperson are to:

1. chair meetings of the Committee and the Group
2. represent the Group at functions/meetings that the Group has been invited to
3. act as spokesperson for the Group when necessary

### (b) The duties of the Secretary are to:

1. take and keep minutes of meetings
2. prepare the agenda for meetings of the Committee and the Group in consultation with the Chairperson
3. maintain the membership list
4. deal with correspondence
5. collect and circulate any relevant information within the Group

### (c) The duties of the Treasurer are to:

1. supervise the financial affairs of the Group
2. keep proper accounts that show all monies collected and paid out by the Group

## 7 Finance

- (a) Any money obtained by the Group shall be used only for the Group.
- (b) Any bank accounts opened for the Group shall be in the name of the Group.
- (c) Any cheques issued shall be signed by the Treasurer and one other nominated official.

## 8 Annual General Meeting

- (a) The Group shall hold an Annual General Meeting (A.G.M.) in the month of \_\_\_\_\_.
- (b) All members shall be given at least fourteen days' notice of the A.G.M. and shall be entitled to attend and vote. The quorum for an AGM shall be \_\_\_\_\_ members.
- (c) The business of the A.G.M. shall include:
  - (i) receiving a report from the Chairperson on the Group's activities over the year
  - (ii) receiving a report from the Treasurer on the finances of the Group
  - (iii) electing a new Management Committee and (iv) considering any other matter as may be decided.



## 9 Special General Meeting

A Special General Meeting may be called by the Management Committee or by any \_\_\_\_ members to discuss an urgent matter. The Secretary shall give all members fourteen days' notice of any Special General Meeting together with notice of the business to be discussed. All members shall be entitled to attend and vote.

## 10 Alterations to the Constitution

Any changes to this Constitution must be agreed by at least two-thirds of those members present and voting at any General Meeting.

## 11 Dissolution

The Group may be wound up at any time if agreed by two-thirds of those members present and voting at any General Meeting. In the event of winding up, any assets remaining after all debts have been paid shall be given to another Group with similar aims.

This constitution was adopted at a general meeting of the Group on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

### Signed by:

Chairperson:

Secretary:

Treasurer:

Other Committee members:

