

Spitalfields Forum

Spitalfields Neighbourhood Planning Forum



CONSTITUTION v.2.2

PREAMBLE:

Tower Hamlets Council, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and pursuant to a decision made on 5th April 2016 by the Mayor in Cabinet, designated the Spitalfields Neighbourhood Planning Area as a Neighbourhood Business Planning Area and approved the Spitalfields Neighbourhood Planning Forum as the Neighbourhood Planning Forum for the Spitalfields Neighbourhood Planning Area.

1. NAME

- a) The long form name of the group is "Spitalfields Neighbourhood Planning Forum" referred to elsewhere in this Constitution as the "Forum";
- b) The short form name of the group is "Spitalfields Forum".

2. NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

The area of the Forum is the neighbourhood business planning area designated by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets as the Spitalfields Neighbourhood Planning Area and is shown on the attached map (Figure 1). It is referred to elsewhere in this constitution as the "neighbourhood area".

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Forum shall be to:

- a) Promote and improve the social, economic, heritage and environmental well being of the Neighbourhood area;
- b) To prepare in partnership with the relevant local planning authority a sustainable Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Neighbourhood area;
- c) To encourage the goodwill and involvement of the wider community in the preparation, production and implementation of the Neighbourhood Development Plan;
- d) To foster community spirit and encourage civic pride;
- e) To promote local prosperity through neighbourhood based economic growth and investment.

4. POWERS

In furtherance of the objects, but not otherwise, the Forum Council may exercise the power to:

- a) Invite and receive contributions and raise funds where appropriate, to finance the work of the Forum, and to open a bank account to manage such funds;

- b) Set up working groups with terms of reference to undertake tasks in furtherance of its objectives. All such working groups must include at least one Forum Council member;
- c) Publicise and promote the work of the Forum and organise meetings, training courses, events or seminars relevant to its work;
- d) Work with groups of a similar nature and exchange information, advice and knowledge with them, including cooperation with other voluntary bodies, charities, statutory and non- statutory organisations;
- e) Employ a Clerk and other staff (who shall not be members of the Forum Council) as are necessary to conduct activities that meet the objectives of the Forum;
- f) Take any form of action that is lawful, which is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Forum, including taking out any contracts which it may see fit.

5. AFFILIATIONS

The Forum shall not be affiliated to any political party or organisation.

6. MEMBERSHIP

- a) Members will apply for membership and the Forum Council shall have the power to accept members. Members of the Forum must be over 18 (eighteen) years of age;
- b) The Forum Council may refuse membership, or may terminate or suspend the membership of any member by resolution passed at a Forum Council meeting where it is considered membership would be detrimental to the objectives and activities of the Forum;
- c) Membership is open to all who live in the neighbourhood area (see Article 2 Above);
- d) Membership is open to all business operators in the neighbourhood area of the Forum – Business operators may nominate up to two people in their membership application but they may only exercise one voting right at General and Annual General Meetings of the Forum;
- e) Membership is open to all constituted voluntary community groups which operate in the neighbourhood area. Voluntary and community groups and local organisations may nominate up to two people in their membership application but they may only exercise one voting right at General and Annual General Meetings of the Forum;
- f) Membership is open to elected London Borough Council members who represent wards in the neighbourhood area;
- g) Membership shall be drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area and different sections of the community;
- h) Any member of the Forum may resign from membership by providing the Secretary with written notice;
- i) The Forum shall have a minimum of 21 (twenty one) members. The Secretary shall maintain a register of members at all times and make it available to any member of the Forum or the public who requests it.

- j) Associate Membership may be granted to any person at the discretion of the Forum Council. Associate Members may attend and participate in Meetings of the Forum but they may neither vote nor be elected to the Forum Council.

7. FORUM MEETINGS

All decisions at Forum meetings shall be made on a show of hands of members who are entitled to vote at the meeting.

- a) General Meetings
 - i. General Meetings of Forum members shall take place at least 3 (three) times per year.
 - ii. Notice and an agenda for a General Meeting of the Forum to Forum members shall be 10 (ten) working days;
 - iii. The quorum required for a General Meeting to conduct business shall be 11 (eleven) Forum members.
- b) Annual General Meetings/Special Meetings
 - i. An Annual General Meeting of Forum members shall take place once in every calendar year. Notice and an agenda for an Annual General Meeting to Forum members shall be 15 (fifteen) working days;
 - ii. The quorum required for an Annual General Meeting to conduct business shall be 15 (fifteen) Forum Members.

The Annual General meeting shall:
 - iii. Elect the Forum Council;
 - iv. Receive a report from the Forum Council of the activities that have taken place in the year;
 - v. Receive a final statement from the Treasurer.

Elections to the Forum Council shall take place as follows:
 - vi. Forum members shall notify the Secretary of the Forum of their intention to stand for a place on the Forum Council in writing and at least 5 (five) working days before the Annual General Meeting takes place;
 - vii. At the Annual General Meeting elections shall be held on the basis of a show of hands for each candidate.
- c) Special Meetings may be called from time to time by the Forum Council to consider amendments to the constitution or dissolution of the Forum. These shall be subject to the same notice and quorum as Annual General Meetings.
- d) Forum Council Meetings
 - i. Forum Council meetings will be held a minimum of 6 times per year;
 - ii. Notice to members of the Forum Council of a Forum Council meeting shall be 7 working days;
 - iii. The quorum required for a Forum Council meeting to conduct business shall be 7 (seven) members;

- iv. Two officers of the Forum Council must be present at each meeting of the Forum Council. One of which must be either the Chairman or the Vice Chairman;
- v. All decisions at Forum Council meetings shall be made on a show of hands of Forum Council members present at the meeting;
- vi. The Officers of the Forum Council shall be elected by the Members of the Forum Council at the first meeting of the Forum Council after the AGM of the Forum;
- vii. To avoid the possibility of the Forum becoming dominated by members of another organisation no more than four members of the Forum Council may at any time be drawn from the Forum membership category for business and no more than four may be drawn from the Forum membership category for voluntary and community groups (see clause 6d and 6e);
- viii. Should any officer or member of the Forum Council resign or otherwise leave the Forum Council before the end of their term then a temporary replacement for any such lapsed member may be selected by the Forum Council from the membership of the Forum who will then take the lapsed member's place on the Forum Council until the next AGM. In such cases where an Officer position becomes vacant then their replacement shall be found from among the pre-existing members of the Forum Council;
- ix. During Forum Council meetings any Forum Council member having a personal or business interest in any decision of the Forum Council must declare that interest and the Forum Council shall have the discretion to exclude that member from that decision;
- x. The Chairman may exercise a second, casting vote after any vote on the Forum Council when there is a deadlock due to a tie.

8. FORUM COUNCIL

The Forum Council shall be elected at an Annual General Meeting of the Forum and shall consist of a minimum of 9 (nine) members up to a maximum of 16 (sixteen).

9. OFFICERS OF THE FORUM COUNCIL

The role of any officer of the Forum Council may be shared by two members of the Forum Council.

- a) The Chairman of the Forum Council shall be responsible for:
 - i. Calling and chairing meetings of the Forum Council, General Meetings and Annual General Meetings of the membership of the Forum, unless specifically delegated to the Vice Chairman in writing;
 - ii. Exercising a casting vote on elections and resolutions at meetings of the Forum and its Council;
 - iii. Have the power to take decisions on urgent matters between meetings of the Forum Council
 - iv. The holder of the office of Chairman shall also be entitled to use the title and style "Honorary Headborough of the Parish and Hamlet of Spitalfields". This is a heritage title of long standing in Spitalfields that symbolically connects Forum with past representative bodies;
 - v. The title and office of Chairman is synonymous to and interchangeable with that of Chairwoman.

- b) The Vice Chairman of the Forum Council shall be responsible for:
 - i. Calling and chairing meetings of the Forum Council, General Meetings and Annual General Meetings of the membership of the Forum, if specifically delegated to by the Chairman in writing.
 - ii. Exercising a casting vote on elections and resolutions at meetings of the Forum and its Forum Council where the Chairman is absent in accordance with rule 9(a)i.
 - iii. The title and office of Vice Chairman is synonymous to and interchangeable with that of Vice Chairwoman.
- c) The Treasurer shall be responsible for:
 - i. Maintaining the financial records of the Forum.
 - ii. Be responsible for presenting the accounts for the year, and a budget for the following year at the Forum Annual General Meeting.
 - iii. Submit a detailed summary of the accounts at every Forum Council meeting.
 - iv. Act as a joint signatory on the Forum account with one other member of the Forum Council.
 - v. Taking the minutes if the Secretary is absent.
- d) The Secretary shall be responsible for:
 - i. Organizing meetings, taking and circulating the minutes and making them available to members within 10 (ten) working days of the previous meeting.
 - ii. Maintaining a register of members of the Forum and the Forum Constitution for inspection by members of the public and Forum Members.

10. THE FINANCES OF THE FORUM

- a) Any money acquired by the Forum, including donations, contributions and bequests, shall be paid into an account operated by the Forum Council in the name of the Forum.
- b) All funds must be applied to the objectives of the Forum and for no other purpose.
- c) Bank accounts shall be opened in the name of the Forum. Any deeds, cheques etc relating to the Forum's bank account shall be signed by at least 2 (two) Forum Council members, 1 (one) of whom must be the Treasurer
- d) Any income/expenditure shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer who will be accountable to ensure funds are utilised effectively and that the Forum stays within its budget.
- e) Official accounts shall be maintained, and will be examined annually by an independent accountant who is not a member of the Forum.
- F) An annual financial report shall be presented by the Treasurer at the Annual General Meeting of the Forum.

11. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

- a) Any decision to submit to the local planning authority for approval any Neighbourhood Development Plan shall be subject to a vote at a General Meeting of the Forum.
- b) All consultation on the Neighbourhood Development Plan will take place with residents and businesses in the neighbourhood area whether members of the Forum or not.

- c) The Forum Council shall be delegated to work with the local planning authority and any independent experts and advisors on the Neighbourhood Development Plan as they see fit.
- d) At the discretion of the Forum Council working groups can be delegated the tasks of preparing the Neighbourhood Development Plan and may co-opt non-voting members onto such working groups as it sees fit. All such working groups must include at least one Forum Council member

12. ALTERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

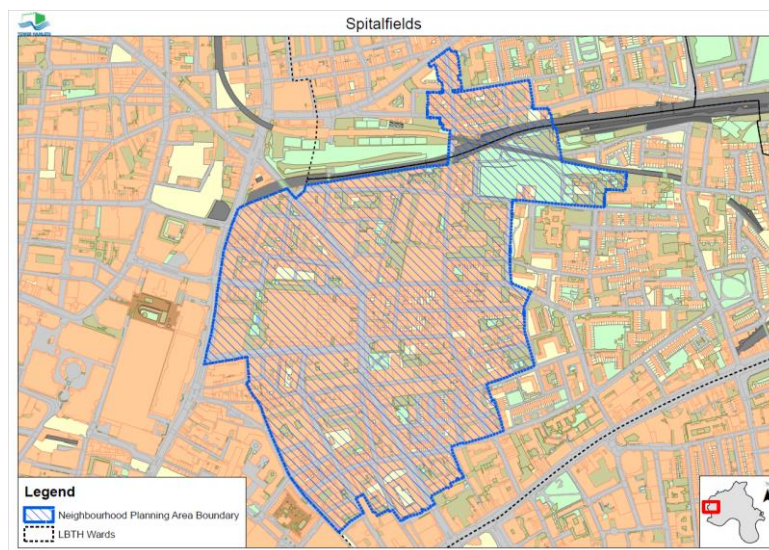
- a) Any changes to this constitution must be agreed by a majority vote at an AGM or at a special general meeting, called specifically for the purpose under the same conditions that apply to Annual General Meetings specified above.
- b) Proposed amendments to this Constitution or dissolution of the Forum must be conveyed to the Secretary formally in writing. The Secretary and other officers of the Forum shall then decide whether to put the proposed amendments to a special general meeting of the Forum for discussion and decision.
- c) Further explanations and clarifications of some parts of this Constitution are found in Standing Orders.
- d) Standing Orders are made and amended by the Forum Council.
- e) The Forum Council must notify the General Membership when Standing Orders are made or amended.

13. DISSOLUTION

The Forum may be dissolved if deemed necessary by the members in a majority vote at a special meeting. Any assets or remaining funds after debts have been paid shall be returned to their providers or transferred to local charities or similar groups at the discretion of the Forum Council.

This Constitution was first drafted by the Interim Steering Group of the Forum on 15 April 2014 and was subsequently amended. It was formally adopted at the Inaugural General Meeting of the Forum on 18 August 2014 (as version 1.6) and officially approved by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets on 5 April 2016. It was then amended (as version 2) by the Forum at a Special General Meeting held on 26 April 2016. Version 2.2 is the current version adopted 30 October 2018.

Figure 1: SPITALFIELDS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING AREA



The Spitalfields Neighbourhood Planning Area (shown in blue) was designated as a neighbourhood business planning area by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets on 5 April 2016 and adopted at a Special General Meeting of the Forum on 26 April 2016.