

# **Friends of Biss Meadows Country Park** **Constitution**

## **Name**

The name of the Group shall be the **Friends of Biss Meadows Country Park, (hereinafter called the Group)**.

## **Aim**

The aim of the Group shall be "To sustain, enhance and promote Biss Meadows Country Park as a local area for nature and the community, by working together with local people and the relevant organisations to improve accessibility while protecting and preserving flora and fauna through careful management, for the enjoyment of everybody".

## **Powers**

In order to achieve its aim the Group may:

- a) Open bank accounts
- b) Raise money
- c) Acquire and run buildings and/or land
- d) Take out insurance
- e) Employ staff, including subcontractors and consultants and to remunerate as required
- f) Organise courses and events
- g) Work with similar groups and exchange information and advice with them
- h) Do anything that is lawful which will help it to fulfil its aim.

## **Membership**

- a) Membership of the Group shall be open to any individual over eighteen without regard to disability, political or religious affiliation, race, sex or sexual orientation who: -
  - Is interested in helping the Group to achieve its aim,
  - Is willing to abide by the rules of the Group and
  - Has completed and handed in a membership form to a member of the Steering Group.

Individuals aged less than eighteen years may be admitted to membership subject to such conditions as the Steering Group may decide, and shall be known as Junior Members. Any Junior Member may attend General Meetings as observers but shall not have the right to vote.

- b) The membership of any member may be terminated for good reason by the Steering Group, provided that the member concerned shall have the right to be heard by all the Steering Group, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

## **Management.**

- a) The Group shall be administered by a Steering Group of not less than four and not more than fifteen individuals elected at the Group's Annual General Meeting (A.G.M.).
- b) The Officers of the Steering Group shall be: the Chair, the Vice Chair, the Treasurer and the Secretary.
- c) The Steering Group may co-opt onto the Steering Group, up to three individuals, in an advisory and non-voting capacity that it feels will help to fulfil the aim of the Group.
- d) The Steering Group shall meet at least four times a year.
- e) At least five Steering Group members must be present for a Steering Group meeting to take place, one of whom must be an officer.
- f) Voting at Steering Group meetings shall be by a show of hands. If there is a tied vote then the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.

- g) The Steering Group shall have the power to remove any member of the Steering Group for good and proper reason. Where such a course of action is under consideration all the other members of the Steering Group must be consulted and vote. Any decision reached must be by a majority vote.
- h) The Steering Group may appoint any other member of the Group as a Steering Group member to fill a vacancy, provided that the maximum prescribed is not exceeded.

### **The Duties of the Officers.**

#### **a) The duties of the Chair shall be to:**

Chair meetings of the Steering Group and the Group  
Represent the Group at functions/meetings that the Group has been invited to and  
Act as the spokesperson of the Group when necessary.

#### **b) The duties of the Vice Chair shall be to:**

Act as the deputy of the Chair as and when the Chair is unable to be present and to:  
Chair meetings of the Steering Group and the Group  
Represent the Group at functions/meetings that the Group has been invited to and  
Act as the spokesperson of the Group when necessary.

#### **c) The duties of the Secretary shall be to:**

Keep a membership list  
Prepare in consultation with the Chair the agenda for meetings of the Steering Group and the Group  
Take and keep minutes of all meetings and  
Collect and circulate any relevant information within the Group.

#### **d) The duties of the Treasurer shall be to:**

Supervise the financial affairs of the Group and  
Keep proper accounts that show all monies received and paid out by the Group.

### **Finance.**

- a) All monies received by or on behalf of the Group shall be applied to further the aim of the Group and for no other purpose.
- b) Any bank accounts opened for the Group shall be in the name of the Group.
- c) Any cheques issued shall be signed by any two of three Steering Group members nominated by the Steering Group as authorised signatories, provided that the two signatories are not related.
- d) The Group shall ensure that its accounts are audited or independently examined every year.
- e) The Group may pay reasonable out of pocket expenses to members or Steering Group members as approved by the Steering Group in advance.

### **Annual General Meeting.**

- a) Once each calendar year, the Group shall hold an Annual General Meeting, being not more than fifteen months after the adoption of this constitution and thereafter the holding of the preceding Annual General Meeting.
- b) All members shall be given at least fourteen days notice of the A.G.M. and shall be entitled to attend and vote.
- c) The business of the A.G.M. shall include:
  - Receiving a report from the Chair or in his/her absence from the Vice Chair
  - on the Group's activities over the year
  - Receiving a report from the Treasurer on the finances of the Group
  - Electing a new Steering Group and
  - Considering any other matter as may be decided and previously notified.
- d) At least 15 or  $\frac{1}{3}$  of voting members (whichever is the lesser) must be present for the Annual General Meeting and any other General Meeting to take place.

**Special General Meeting.**

A Special General Meeting may be called by the Steering Group or where a minimum of 12 members have submitted a written request, giving reasons for the request, 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.

**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.

**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 a similar aim.

**Adoption of the Constitution.**

**Arrangements until the First Annual General Meeting**

Until the first Annual General Meeting takes place this constitution shall take effect as if references in it to the Steering Group were references to the persons whose names appear below.

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This Constitution was adopted as the Constitution of the Friends of Biss Meadows Country Park at a public meeting held at ... .. on..... 20 ..... at which the following people were elected as members of an Interim Steering Group to serve until the first Annual General Meeting.

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Signed:

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Chair of the meeting

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Secretary of the meeting

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\_\_\_\_\_ (Chair)

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\_\_\_\_\_ (Vice Chair)

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\_\_\_\_\_ (Secretary)

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\_\_\_\_\_ (Treasurer)

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