

# Constitution of the Friends of Blythe Hill Fields

**19 October 2016**

(the "Constitution")



[www.blythehilfields.org.uk](http://www.blythehilfields.org.uk)



## Constitution of the Friends of Blythe Hill Fields

### 1. Name

The name of the Association shall be THE FRIENDS OF BLYTHE HILL FIELDS (the “**Friends**”).

### 2. Aim

The aim of the Friends shall be to promote the increased use, access to and enjoyment of the public park known as Blythe Hill Fields in the London Borough of Lewisham for the benefit of local residents and other users of this essential open space (the “**Aim**”).

### 3. Objectives

3.1 Acting as a forum for the community, the Friends will work with partners such as Lewisham Borough Council and their parks contractor (currently Glendale), to maintain existing facilities as well as develop and install new ones for the benefit of the whole community (the “**Objectives**”).

3.2 The Friends’ equal opportunities policy is published on its website and underpins all its meetings and activities (the “**Equal Opportunities Policy**”).

3.3 In order for the Friends to achieve its Objectives it may, as appropriate:

- (i) Raise money;
- (ii) Open bank accounts;
- (iii) Take out appropriate insurances;
- (iv) Organise events and activities; and/or
- (v) Exchange information and/or work with other similar and local groups.

### 4. Membership of the Friends

4.1 Membership of the Friends, which is conferred by admission to the Friends’ mailing list, shall be open to any individual, regardless of disability, political or religious affiliation, race, sex or sexual orientation who is:

- (i) In agreement with the Aim and Objectives of the Friends and the Friends’ Equal Opportunities Policy;
- (ii) Interested in supporting the development of the Friends, its Aims and Objectives and participating in its activities;
- (iii) Willing to attend General Meetings of the Membership and abide by the Friends’ Membership Rules and Code of Conduct at Meetings (as set out in Appendix 1);
- (iv) Willing to contribute to the running costs of the Friends as necessary, by fundraising or minimal subscription (together the “**Membership**”, separately a “**Member**” or “**Members**”).

## 5. Committee

- 5.1 The Friends shall have a committee of a minimum of four and a maximum of fifteen elected members (the “**Committee**”), comprising three elected officers (namely the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer (the “**Executive**”)), plus a maximum of twelve committee members (“**Committee Members**”), who shall all be elected at the Friends’ Annual General Meeting (“**AGM**”) or if agreed by a majority of at least two thirds of those present and voting at a subsequent General Meeting of the Membership.
- 5.2 The Committee shall continue the work of the Friends between General Meetings of the Membership and be able to take decisions on behalf of the Friends (which shall be reported to the Membership at the next General Meeting).
- 5.3 The members of the Committee shall normally be elected for a period of twelve months from the AGM and shall need to be nominated for re-election, if they wish to stand, at the following AGM. Casual vacancies during the year shall be notified as soon as possible to the Membership and be filled at the next General Meeting.
- 5.4 Duties of the Committee are outlined at Appendix 2.
- 5.5 The Committee may as necessary, in order to fulfil the aims of the Friends:
  - (i) Co-opt onto the Committee up to two individuals in an advisory and non-voting capacity; and/or
  - (ii) Set up Sub-Committees to work on particular events or issues, such as the annual Festival and wildlife/biodiversity issues, who will report back to the Committee and/or to the next General Meeting of the Membership.
- 5.6 If in the reasonable view of a Committee Member, a Member is acting in contravention of the Constitution (including the Code of Conduct at Meetings (as set out in Appendix 1B)) then the Committee Member may propose that the Member is excluded from the Membership (“**Exclusion**”). Any such Exclusion shall be determined by at least a two-thirds majority vote of those Members present and voting at a General Meeting of the Membership.

## 6. Meetings and Voting

- 6.1 The Committee shall meet as required during the year. General Meetings of the Membership shall take place four times per year, or as required. Other Membership meetings may be called from time to time by the Friends’ Secretary to deal with urgent matters.
- 6.2 Dates of General Meetings shall normally be circulated by email and posted on the Friends’ website, as will the Minutes of meetings.
- 6.3 Each Member present shall have one vote. Voting in a Membership meeting shall be by show of hands and agreed by at least a two-thirds majority vote of those Members present and voting.
- 6.4 At least three members of the Committee must be present for a Membership meeting to take place.

## 7. Finance

- 7.1 The Friends’ financial year shall run from 1 October to 30 September each year. A statement of income and expenditure will be prepared at the end of each year for presentation and agreement at the AGM. Where possible, the statement and the financial records should be independently inspected prior to presentation at the AGM. Following the AGM, the statement shall be published on the Friends’ website or wherever practical.
- 7.2 Any bank accounts opened for the Friends shall be in the name of The Friends of Blythe Hill Fields and must have four signatories, the Chair, Treasurer and two other Committee Members. To avoid conflicts of interest, the signatories should not be related. The majority of financial transactions shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer.
- 7.3 Any cheque issued must be signed by the Treasurer and one other signatory. There will be a delegated responsibility to the Treasurer for debit card and online banking transactions up to £150 beyond which email authorisation from another signatory will be required.
- 7.4 The Treasurer shall keep an accurate record of all income and expenditure through the year which will become the basis of the annual statement. For major events e.g. annual festival, a separate statement of income and expenditure shall be prepared as soon as practically possible following the event for presentation at a General Meeting.

## **8. Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

8.1 The AGM of the Friends shall be held normally in the month of October of each year, and not later than mid-November.

8.2 All Members shall be given at least fourteen days' notice of the AGM and shall be entitled to attend and vote.

8.3 The business of the AGM shall include:

- Receiving a report from the Committee on the Friends activities over the year;
- Receiving a report from the Treasurer on the finances of the Friends;
- Electing and/or re-electing members of the Committee;
- Considering any other matters as may need to be decided.

8.4 At least four Committee Members must be present in order for the AGM to take place. In the event of the AGM not taking place, a new date must be set by the Committee and a re-notification of the new date shall be circulated by the Secretary, in addition to a note explaining that the original AGM was not quorate so did not proceed.

## **9. Alterations to the Constitution**

9.1 Any changes to the Constitution must be agreed by at least a two-thirds majority vote of those Members present at a General Meeting of the Membership.

## **10. Dissolution of the Friends**

10.1 The Friends may be wound up at any time if agreed at a Special Meeting of the Membership by at least two thirds of those Members present and voting. In the event of winding up, any assets after all debts have been paid shall be given to another Friends with similar aims.

## **Appendix 1**

### **A: Membership Rules for Members of the Friends of Blythe Hill Fields**

1. To attend all meetings wherever possible and send apologies to the Secretary if unable to attend.
2. To support the Committee in furthering the Aims of the Friends.
3. Take on other activities/specific projects to further the Aims of the Friends.
4. To ensure the Secretary has relevant contact details including an email address where possible. Minutes will only usually be circulated on the Friends' website. Any Member wishing to receive the minutes in paper copy must contact the Secretary.
5. To abide by the Code of Conduct at Meetings.

### **B: Code of Conduct at Meetings**

1. At all times, Members will respect views, opinions and suggestions of all others present.
2. Members shall conduct themselves in a polite and courteous manner. All Members will be given a chance to speak; speaking over another member is not acceptable. Members who speak over another during a meeting will be given a warning. Any further repetition, the Chair shall ask the Member to leave that particular meeting.
3. At no time during a meeting shall swearing be acceptable. Members who swear during a meeting will be given a warning. Any further repetition, the Chair shall ask the member to leave that particular meeting.
4. The Chair reserves the right to keep meetings moving and may need to close discussions in order to complete a meeting agenda.

5. If in the reasonable belief of a Committee Member a Member has acted in contravention of the Constitution or its Appendices, then that Member may be referred by the Committee and removed from the Membership (see 5.6 of the Constitution above).

## **Appendix 2**

### **Duties of the Executive**

#### **CHAIR**

- Chair meetings of the Membership and Committee;
- Direct the strategy and future priorities of the Friends, in collaboration with Secretary, the Committee and the Sub-Committees;
- Represent the Friends at functions/meetings that the Friends has been invited to;
- Act as spokesperson for the Friends as and when necessary;
- Take the lead in co-ordinating fundraising, particularly in relation to the annual Festival.

#### **SECRETARY**

- Prepare, in consultation with the Chair, the agenda for General Meetings of the Membership and meetings of the Committee and the Membership;
- Find and book appropriate meeting spaces;
- Take, circulate and store minutes of all meetings;
- Collect and circulate any other relevant information within the Membership;
- Prepare and arrange circulation of the Group's Newsletter;
- Supervise the mailing list which comprises the register of Membership.

#### **TREASURER**

- Supervise and be responsible for the financial affairs of the Friends;
- Keep good and proper accounts of all the Friends' income and expenditure;
- In particular, play a key role in establishing the budget for the annual Festival and in controlling the Festival's income and expenditure;
- Provide financial reports as soon as practical following large events such as an annual Festival and at the AGM;
- Undertake to have the Friends finances independently inspected each year in advance of the AGM;
- Undertake to seek financial advice on the Friends behalf as necessary.

**The original Constitution of the Friends was adopted at a General Meeting of the Membership on 9 March 2006 (the "Original Constitution"). Following the change of name from Blythe Hill Fields User Group to Friends of Blythe Hill Fields, the Original Constitution was re-adopted at a General Meeting on 13 November 2008. This version of the Constitution was adopted by the Friends on 19 October 2016.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**James Cross**

Chair