

# CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNTY DURHAM HISTORY AND HERITAGE FORUM

Revised on the 14th day of March 2020

## 1. NAME

The name of the organisation is *The County Durham History and Heritage Forum*

## 2. ADMINISTRATION

The Forum and its property shall be administered and managed by a committee elected in accordance with clause 7 of this constitution - *the Committee*.

## 3. OBJECTS

The Forum's objects ("the objects") are: To advance the education of the general public in historical and heritage matters particularly in relation to matters of a local and regional significance in the historic County Durham area (hereafter known as the area of benefit)

## 4. POWERS

In furtherance of the objects but not otherwise the Committee may use the following powers:

- (a) to raise funds and to invite and receive contributions: provided that in raising funds the Committee shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law;
- b) to insure and arrange insurance cover and to indemnify its voluntary workers from and against all such risks incurred in the performance of their duties as may be thought fit;
- c) to write, print or publish, in whatever form, such papers, books, periodicals, pamphlets or other documents including films and recorded material as shall further its objects, and to issue or circulate the same whether for payment or otherwise;
- (d) to bring together in conference representatives of voluntary organisations, statutory authorities and individuals;
- (e) to foster and encourage co-operation and communication between similar organisations, societies and statutory authorities and to represent the views of members of the Forum;
- (f) to establish or support such advisory committees as the Management Committee may think fit;
- (g) to do all such lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the objects.

## 5. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Forum shall be open to all irrespective of sex, race, age, nationality or of political, religious or other opinion.

A i Associations, organisations and businesses whether corporate or unincorporated, which operate solely or in part in the area of benefit and wish to support the objects of the Forum, shall be known as *member organisations*.

A ii Each such member organisation shall appoint one individual to represent it and vote on its behalf at General Meetings of the Forum. If the appointed person cannot attend they may send one alternative to vote on their behalf at General Meetings of the Forum. If the representative or alternative resigns from or otherwise leaves the member organisation, he or she shall forthwith cease to be the representative of the member organisation;

B. Individuals who wish to support the objects of the Forum, shall be known as individual members;

C. Young people under the age of 18, who wish to support the objects of the Forum, shall be known as junior members;

The Committee may unanimously and for good reason terminate the membership of any individual or member organisation, provided that those concerned shall have the right to appeal in person to the Committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

## 6. OFFICERS

At the Annual General Meeting of the Forum the members shall elect from amongst themselves an Honorary Chair, Honorary Vice Chair, Honorary Secretary and an Honorary Treasurer and any other Officers as may from time to time be decided, who shall hold office from the conclusion of the meeting.

## 7. COMMITTEE

(a) The Committee shall consist of:

- (i) the officers elected in accordance with Clause 6;
- (ii) not more than 9 members elected by and from the members at the Annual General meeting who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting.
- (iii) The Management Committee may in addition appoint not more than 2 co-opted members but so that no-one may be appointed as a co-opted member, if as a result, more than one third of the members of the Management Committee would be co-opted members.

(b) All members of the Committee shall retire from office together at the next year's Annual General Meeting after the date on which they came into office but they may be re-elected.

(c) A member of the Committee shall cease to hold office if he or she:

- i) is absent without the permission of the Committee from all its meetings held within a period of six months without good cause and the Committee agrees that his or her office should be declared vacant; or
- ii) notifies the Committee of a wish to resign: provided that at least three members of the Committee will remain in office when the notice of resignation is to take effect.

## 8. MEETINGS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

(a) The Committee shall hold at least 4 ordinary meetings each year. At least 7 days' notice shall be given of all ordinary meetings of the Committee.

(b) The Chair of the Forum shall act as Chair at meetings of the Committee. If the Chair is absent from any meeting the Vice Chair will act in their place.

(c) There shall be a quorum when at least one third of the number of members of the Committee or three members of the Committee, whichever is the greater, are present at a meeting.

(d) Every matter shall be decided by a majority of votes of the members of the Committee present and voting on the question but in the case of an equality of votes the chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

(e) The Committee may appoint one or more sub-committees for the supervision of any activity which the Committee feels would be more conveniently undertaken by a subcommittee. Any subcommittee so appointed shall report its proceedings to the Committee.

(f) The Committee shall keep minutes, in hard copy, of the proceedings at meetings of the Committee and any sub-committee.

(g) The Committee may from time to time make and alter rules for the Forum and the conduct of its business, the summoning and conduct of its meetings and the custody of its documents. No rule shall be made which conflicts with this constitution.

## 9. RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

(a) The funds of the Forum, including all donations and contributions shall be paid into an account operated by the Committee in the name of the Forum at such a bank/building society, as the Committee shall from time to time decide. All cheques drawn on the account shall be signed by at least two members of the Committee.

(b) The funds belonging to the Forum shall be applied only in furthering the objects except for the payment of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the Forum.

(c) The financial year shall run from 1st January to 31st December.

(d) Annual subscriptions are payable on 1st January for the financial year then beginning. If an individual member or member organisation fails to pay the required annual subscription by the end of March in any year that individual or organisation shall cease to be a member.

## 10. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

(a) There shall be an Annual General Meeting of the Forum which shall be held each year within three months of the end of the financial year (i.e. by 31st March). At least six member organisations will need to be in attendance for the meeting to be quorate.

(b) Every Annual General Meeting shall be called by the Committee. All members of the Forum shall be entitled to attend with *Member Organisations* being entitled to vote (see 5 A (ii) above).

(c) The Chair of the Committee shall act as the Chair of the Annual General Meeting but if he or she is not present, before any other business is dealt with, the persons present shall appoint a chair of the meeting.

(d) The Committee shall present to each Annual General Meeting the report and accounts of the Forum for the preceding year.

(e) Nominations for election to the Committee must be in the hands of the Honorary Secretary 7 days prior to the AGM. If there are still vacancies then members of the Forum may nominate from the floor at the AGM.

## 11. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

The Committee may call a special general meeting of members at any time. If at least one tenth of the member organisations or three member organisations, whichever is the greater, request such a meeting, in writing, stating the business to be considered the Secretary shall call such a meeting. The notice must state the business to be discussed.

## 12. PROCEDURE AT GENERAL MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

(a) The Secretary or other person specially appointed by the Committee shall keep a full record of proceedings at every general meeting of members.

(b) There shall be a quorum when at least six member organisations of the Forum are present at any general meeting.

(c) At least seven days' notice of all general meetings shall be given, in writing, to all members of the Forum and/or displayed in a conspicuous place or places in the area of benefit and/or advertised in a newspaper circulating in the area of benefit.

## 13. ALTERATIONS TO CONSTITUTION

The Constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the member organisations present and voting at a general meeting. The notice of the meeting must set out the details of the proposed alterations.

## 14. DISSOLUTION OF THE FORUM

If the Committee decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Forum it shall call a meeting of all members of the Forum. The notice of the meeting shall state the terms of the resolution to be proposed. If the proposal is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of those member organisations present and voting the Committee shall have power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the Forum. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to another group which has objects similar to the objects of the Forum.