

Friends Group Constitution

NAME OF THE GROUP:

Friends of our Valley

AREA OF BENEFIT: The area of benefit shall be the Goyt Valley between Strines Dove Côte and Low Lea Road Marple Bridge and it's surrounds.

AIMS OF THE GROUP:

To promote the conservation, enhancement and use of the valley for the benefit of residents, visitors and wildlife and to encourage and facilitate greater use and enjoyment of the valley by all. To provide a varied, safe, high quality environment that will meet the needs of the local community, allowing people of all ages and abilities to enjoy both active and passive recreation and encourage the enjoyment and appreciation of the natural environment. In pursuance of this aim the group will seek to:

- a. To enhance and promote ease of access to the valley for all users.
- b. To promote the wide use of the valley.
- c. To enhance the valley area for the benefit of the whole community and all users of the valley.
- d. To improve the recreational, environmental and educational facilities of the valley.
- e. To provide an accessible haven for the enjoyment of the countryside where as far as possible the needs of wildlife are met while encouraging public access.
- f. To preserve the heritage and archaeology of the valley.
- g. To encourage a wide variety of activities in the valley which are compatible with its nature.
- h. To provide a safe environment for all users of the valley.
- i. To ensure that any changes are sustainable and respect the valleys heritage, ecology and distinctiveness.
- j. To work with all appropriate bodies to encourage use of the valley.
- k. Form links and work co-operatively with the local authority, businesses, community groups, charities, schools and other appropriate organisations, with particular regard to existing on-site users.
- l. Organise, host and fund events and activities within or associated with the valley.
- m. Compliment other projects of positive benefit to the valley that are moving forward in the valley area.

MEMBERSHIP:

Membership shall be open to:

- a. All local residents in and around the valley and surrounding area,
- b. All users of the valley,

(regardless of age, nationality, political party, race, gender or religious opinions or beliefs, sex, sexuality or disability) provided the member is interested in furthering the

aims and objectives of the group, provided that they have completed an application form and have paid the appropriate subscription fee where appropriate.

Membership shall be deemed for life.

All categories of membership shall be entitled to cast one vote (except those under eleven years of age who are not entitled to a vote) after a period of three months from joining.

MEMBERSHIP FEE/ SUBSCRIPTION:

Under 18s Free. Other members shall pay a minimal fee of £1 on initial membership, thereafter they are deemed life members. Voluntary donations in consequent years are welcomed. Any decisions to adjust the fee shall be made at an AGM.

THE COMMITTEE:

- a. A committee shall be elected to carry out the business of the Friends Group.
- b. The committee shall be made up of a Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and three general members.
- c. The committee shall be elected at the annual general meeting. Vacancies arising through the year can be filled by co-operation by the committee members at general meetings.
- d. Minutes of committee meetings shall be available to all members.
- e. The committee can introduce or appoint new members as required.
- f. An external person should independently verify the accounts of the Friends of the Valley group once every three years.

COMMITTEE OFFICERS' ROLES:

- a. The Chair will ensure the smooth running of meetings in a fair and efficient manner. The Vice Chair will take the role of Chair if the Chair is absent.
- b. The Secretary will keep accurate notes of meetings, collate agendas for meetings, produce correspondence on behalf of the committee and make sure that all members of the group are kept informed and involved. Report to the committee on any correspondence received and make available to the members all agendas and notes of meetings as appropriate. The secretary should keep a membership list and arrange and notify members and committee members of meetings as appropriate. Minutes of the last meeting should be distributed to committee members at least seven days before the next meeting.
- c. The Treasurer will bank and account for any funds for which the committee is responsible. Open the Group's bank account with at least three signatories who will be the Chair, the Treasurer and the Secretary. The Treasurer must pay any approved expenditure and report to the committee quarterly on its financial position. The Treasurer must also manage petty cash and keep accurate books.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

- a. There shall be an annual general meeting held every year at which the committee will report on its work, present a statement of accounts and stand down to seek re-election.
- b. The AGM shall elect a new committee, vote on recommendations and any amendments to the constitution.
- c. The secretary will notify all members of the date of the AGM meeting not less than 14 days before the AGM.
- d. The secretary shall keep a membership list and voting rights will be allowed after a period of three months from joining.
- e. Where there is a hung-vote within the committee/ AGM the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

OTHER GENERAL MEETINGS:

- a. There will be a general meeting open to all members when required.
- b. The secretary will publicise all general meetings at least five days in advance.
- c. An extraordinary general meeting open to all members will be held if four or more members submit in writing a request for such a meeting to the secretary. The secretary shall arrange for the meeting to take place within fourteen days.

QUORUM:

No committee meeting shall take place if less than 4 members of the committee are present.

No general meeting, AGM or extraordinary general meeting shall take place if less than 4 members are present.

Decisions at committee meetings, general meetings, AGMs, extraordinary general meetings will be reached by means of a simple majority vote, a minimum of 51%. This will normally be made by a show of hands, unless at least two members ask for a secret ballot. In the event of an equal vote, the Chair will have the casting vote.

CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

- a. The constitution can be altered at an AGM.
- b. Any suggested changes must be handed to the secretary fourteen days before the AGM.
- c. Changes to the constitution may be made following a vote at an annual general meeting.
- d. Changes to the constitution must be agreed by two thirds of the members present at the AGM.

DISSOLUTION:

- a. The Group may only be dissolved at an Extraordinary General Meeting called for that purpose.
- b. A proposal to dissolve the group shall take effect only if agreed by two thirds of the members present at the meeting.

- c. Funds and possessions will be disposed of according to the wishes of the meeting.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICIES:

The group must actively seek to represent the needs and aspirations of all residents, visitors and users of the valley area represented. The group must uphold opportunities and work for good relations among all members of the community.

The Group must not discriminate on the grounds of age, nationality, political party, race, gender or religious opinions or beliefs, sex, sexuality or disability.

CHAIR:

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