



Model Constitution Template: Unincorporated Community Group

(Guidance notes should be deleted once final version has been agreed)

NAME

The name of the Group shall be _____

**The name of the group should be simple and clear, and it should reflect your group's identity.*

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The aims of the Group shall be to _____

**This sets out the main purpose of your group in no more than a few sentences (why it exists or what it hopes to achieve), the activities you will provide, geographical area of benefit, also who will benefit from your group.*

You may also want to include a statement of your commitment to equal opportunities in your constitution as well, for example "The group will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, disability, religious or political belief, marital status or age."

POWERS

To further these aims the management committee shall have power to:

- (a) Obtain, collect and receive money or funds by way of subscriptions, donations, grants and any other lawful method towards the aims of the Group.
- (b) Co-operate with, support and work in partnership with other local statutory authorities, community groups, charities and corporate bodies in a common effort to carry out the aims of the Group.

(c) Do all such lawful things as will further the aims of the Group.

**This clause gives your group powers to do activities in order to reach your aims.*

MEMBERSHIP

(a) Membership of the Group shall be open to:

(i) Individuals (over the age of 18 years) who are interested in furthering the work of the Group and who have paid any annual subscription set by the Management Committee

(ii) Any other statutory, voluntary and community or corporate body which is interested in furthering the Group's work and has paid any annual subscription

(b) Every member shall have one vote.

(c) The Executive Committee may unanimously and for good reason terminate the membership of any individual or member organization provided that the individual concerned or the appointed representative of the member organisation concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Executive Committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

You need to decide who will be entitled to be a member. This could be:

- *everyone who pays a membership fee; or*
- *everyone who lives in a certain area; or*
- *all users and volunteers at the project; or*
- *anyone who supports the aims of the group and participates in its activities*

**All voluntary and community groups have a membership structure. In legal terms a member is a person or group who agrees to abide by the constitution in return for rights given in the constitution. Members will be entitled to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The constitution should define who is eligible for membership, categories of membership (i.e. voting and non- voting), how membership is approved, membership subscriptions and members' meetings. You will need to adhere to the Principles of Data Protection, as detailed in the Data Protection Act 1998, if you are keeping records of members contact details. This means personal data is safeguarded and cannot be used without their consent. Members will be able to attend the AGM and have a vote.*

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

(Name of Group) will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, disability, religion or political belief, marital status or age.

MANAGEMENT

(a) A Management Committee elected annually at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall manage the Group.

**Your group will need to set up a Management Committee to make decisions about the group. It is also necessary to have Annual General Meeting (AGM) where the Management Committee is elected by the membership.*

(b) The committee shall consist of a chair, secretary, treasurer, and _____ other voting members.

**Unincorporated Associations have, as a minimum, a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer who each have specific roles and responsibilities.*

(c) The committee may co-opt up to a further _____ voting members who shall resign at the next Annual General Meeting.

**This clause is optional. The management committee has the power to co-opt people onto the committee, who would have full voting rights. This process may be used to fill places which were not filled at an election, fill vacancies which arise between elections, and bring people with specific skills or experience onto the committee but they must stand down at the next AGM.*

(d) The committee shall meet at least _____ times each year.

**You need to specify how often your Management Committee will meet each year. This will depend on the activities that you will undertake, and how often decisions will need to be made (around 6 meetings a year).*

(e) At least 3 committee members must be present at a committee meeting to be able to make decisions.

**Here you should determine how many members of the management Committee should be present to enable decisions to be made about the group. We have suggested 3, but this could be more, depending on how many members of the management committee there are.*

(f) A proper record of all transactions and meetings shall be kept.

**You will need to take proper records (minutes) of the meeting and keep these in a proper minute book. This task is generally the responsibility of the Secretary.*

GENERAL MEETINGS

(a) An Annual General Meeting shall be held within 12 months of the date of the adoption of this constitution and each year thereafter. The trustees shall present the annual report and accounts. Members shall elect between 3 and ___ committee members to serve for the next year. They will retire at the next AGM but may stand for re-election.

**It is standard practice for a group to have one formal meeting of all members each year. It is worth thinking about setting a maximum number of committee members to ensure the group remains focused and not too unwieldy to operate effectively.*

(b) Notices of the AGM shall be published three weeks beforehand and a report on the Group's financial position for the previous year will be made available at the same time.

**You will need to give members as much notice as possible about the AGM. By Notices we mean informing members about the meeting, when and where it will take place as well as the agenda items.*

(c) A Special General Meeting may be called at any time at the request of the committee, or not less than one quarter of the membership. A notice explaining the place, date, time and reason shall be sent to all members three weeks beforehand.

**This clause sets out the rule about calling any member meetings other than the AGM. You can adapt this depending on your needs.*

(d) One third of membership or four members being present, whichever is the greater, shall enable a General Meeting to take place.

**This sets out how many of the members must be present in order to hold any member meetings. This will depend on the number of members that you have.*

(e) Proposals to change the constitution must be given in writing to the secretary at least 28 days before a general meeting and approved by a two thirds majority of those present and voting.

**This clause explains the procedure for making changes to the constitution.*

FINANCE

(a) The funds of the group including all donations, subscriptions and grants, shall be paid into an account operated by the management committee. All cheques drawn on the account must be signed by at least two members of the Management Committee.

(b) The funds belonging to the Group shall be applied only to further the aims of the group.

(c) A current record of all income, funding and expenditure will be kept.

(d) Trustees cannot receive any money or property from the charity, except to refund reasonable out of pocket expenses.

**The constitution needs to lay down the basic procedures for handling accounts and state that funds raised will only be used for the group.*

DISSOLUTION

(a) The Group may be dissolved by a resolution passed by a simple two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a Special General Meeting.

(b) If confirmed, the committee shall distribute any assets remaining after the payment of all liabilities to other charitable group(s) or organisation(s) having aims similar to the Group or some other charitable purpose(s) as the Group may decide.

**Dissolution simply means what will happen if your group closes down (dissolves). Part (a) sets out how many people must be present in order to dissolve the group, and part (b) sets out what will happen to any resources that your group has if it dissolves*

SETTING UP THE CHARITY

This constitution was adopted on _____20__ by the people whose signatures appear below. They are the first members of the Group and will be the trustees until the AGM, which must be held within one year of this date.

Signed by Chair.....Date.....

Signed by Secretary..... Date.....

Signed by Treasurer..... Date.....

**The Management Committee needs to sign and date the constitution.*