

HINCHINGBROOKE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION, SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND CODE OF CONDUCT

1. NAME OF RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Residents' Association name is: **Hinchingbrooke Residents Association**

Web address: www.HinchingbrookeResidents.org

2. AREA OF BENEFIT

The area covered by the Residents' Association is per the list of street names in Appendix 3 and any other streets or homes on the Hinchingbrooke estate that the Committee feel should be included

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the Residents' Association (RA) are to:

- a. Represent and to promote the interests of all residents living in our area.
- b. Foster community involvement
- c. Act as a point of contact and a source of news and information for the local area
- d. Build community spirit and help residents to get to know each other better, gaining trust and working together to find solutions to improve the neighbourhood
- e. Ensure that members are consulted regularly and that all residents eligible for membership are encouraged to join

4. NATURE OF GROUP & EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 The RA is non-political, independent and not under the control of any outside body.

4.2 The RA shall uphold equal opportunities and work for good relations among the community, specifically prohibiting any conduct that discriminates or harasses on grounds such as ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality or belief (or any other protected characteristics).

4.3 Where possible reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure activities are accessible to all. The RA will try to hold meetings at times, dates and in venues, which encourage the maximum attendance, as well as providing sufficient notice of meetings.

4.4 The RA endeavours to carefully consider whether decisions made by the RA at general meetings might unfairly disadvantage members of the community.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1 Membership is open and available to all those 18 years or over living in the Area of Benefit (see 2 above) who accept the aims of the RA and have paid their annual subscription.
- 5.2 The RA will provide members who attend meetings with information about the role of the RA and how it works. A copy of the constitution and code of conduct will be available to all members of the RA on request.
- 5.3 All RA members are expected to act in accordance with the RA's Code of Conduct (see Appendix 1), and action will be taken in line with the code when there is a breach.
- 5.4 Membership will end when a member stops living in the RA's area. If this person is an elected officer of the RA's Committee, their post will become vacant and an election for the newly vacated post must take place at the next general meeting of the RA.

6. THE COMMITTEE

- 6.1 The RA will elect a Committee from its membership to oversee the activities, finances and membership of the RA.
- 6.2 There will only be one Committee member per household. In view of the potential conflict of interest, elected MP's, Local Town and District Councillors and Housing Service staff are not eligible to be Officers of the RA.
- 6.3 The General Management of the RA shall be vested in the Committee, who shall perform all such acts, as may be deemed necessary or expedient to further the objects of the RA.
- 6.4 The RA will be run by a Committee elected at the Annual general meeting. The Committee will include a minimum of 3 Officers: Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, as well as General Officers. The size of the committee should be no fewer than 3 and no more than 10 members.
- 6.5 If a Committee Officer misses 3 consecutive meetings without apologies, the rest of the Committee may choose to suspend or remove that member from the Committee by a simple majority vote.
- 6.6 Where a casual vacancy arises on the Committee it will be filled by election at the next AGM

7. DUTIES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- 7.1 **The Chair** is the spokesperson for the RA. The Chair will preside over meetings.

The Chair sets the meeting agenda, with input from other committee members and ensures meetings run efficiently. The Chair ensures that any actions agreed are carried out by members in between meetings. In the absence of the Chair, members in attendance will elect a member to act as Chair for the duration of the meeting.

- 7.2 **The Secretary** is responsible for convening all meetings and giving the relevant notice and documents to members. For each meeting the Secretary will produce an agenda and publish to members notifying them of each meeting. For each meeting the Secretary will record minutes, distribute and keep them on file for future reference. Minutes will be published afterwards for all members of the RA to access.

The Secretary will maintain a register of members of the RA, including addresses and contact details.

7.3 The Treasurer is responsible for the group's money and paying bills, they record all the money the group receives and spends. The Treasurer will open and/or maintain a bank account in the name of the RA.

The Treasurer will keep proper records of income and expenditure and report on them as required by the committee or general meeting. Such accounts must be subject to an annual independent examination and a report presented to the Annual General Meeting.

7.4 The IT Officer is responsible for the selection, running and functionality of the online technology used by the RA. This includes the website and any email boxes used by the RA. The It Officer will provide technical support and advise and implement appropriate security measures and will advise and assist in the planning for future technology needs.

8. MEETINGS OF THE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

8.1 There will be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the RA once each calendar year and not more than 18 months shall pass between the date of one AGM and the next.

8.2 The purpose of the AGM is to give feedback to the membership on the RA's activities over the last 12 months, agree the RA accounts, and elect a new Committee.

8.3 A representative from the local Town Council will also be invited to attend.

8.4 Notice of the AGM will be published on the RA website at least 14 days in advance. Members should be made aware that they will have the opportunity to make nominations for election or stand for election themselves and to vote for the officers and committee at the meeting.

8.5 At the meeting:

- a. The minutes of the previous AGM will be presented and approved
- b. The annual report from the Committee (or Chair) will be received
- b. The statement of accounts from the Treasurer will be received
- c. The existing Committee will stand down
- d. The Officers and General Committee for next year will be elected
- e. There will be a Vote on any recommendations and any previously advertised amendments to the Constitution (see section 11)

8.6 Any member may stand for a Committee position at the AGM. They can nominate themselves or be nominated by another member. For the nomination to stand, it must be seconded by another member. The nominated person must either be present at the AGM or has put in writing (email will suffice) that they wish to stand.

8.7 If there is nobody willing to stand, the existing Committee will decide whether to commence procedures to close the RA. Alternatively the Committee can continue in office to try to recruit a new committee or formally dissolve the RA within the following 6 months.

GENERAL MEETINGS

8.7 The business of the RA shall be conducted at General Meetings. The RA will hold at least 3 meetings per year, one of which can be the AGM. Meetings will be open to all eligible members of the RA and records of attendance should be kept showing active membership

8.8 The RA must publicise General Meetings to households in the area in order to involve all members and hear their views. At least 14 days' notice of a General Meeting must be given. It is anticipated that this will routinely be via the website.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

8.9 Committee meetings are not mandatory but may be called by any 2 Committee members. The meetings may be called to consider any matter which requires the immediate attention of the RA and for the effective running of the RA. The Committee may deal with any matters which require decision during the periods between General Meetings and report these at the next General Meeting.

9. QUORUM & VOTING

9.1 Quorum for the AGM should be a minimum of 5 members (5 residents for the inaugural meeting). Quorum for a General Meeting or a Committee Meeting should be no less than 3 members.

9.2 If quorum is not present within half an hour after a meeting commencing, or if during a meeting a quorum ceases to be present, the meeting shall be adjourned to such time and place, as the Committee shall determine with at least 7 days' notice to members. Any votes or decisions prior to the adjournment will stand.

9.3 Every member of the RA present at the AGM and General Meetings will have a vote.

9.4 Only members of the Committee present may vote at Committee Meetings.

9.5 Decisions at all meetings will be made by a simple majority of votes. In the event of a tie in votes, the Chair of the meeting shall have the casting vote.

10. ACCOUNTS AND FINANCE

10.1 The Residents' Association will have a bank account in the name of **Hinchingbrooke Residents Association**

10.2 The signatories of 2 Committee members must appear on any cheque or other means of withdrawal.

10.3 The financial year for the group shall run from April to March each year.

10.4 The accounts will be independently reviewed annually.

10.5 All monies raised by or on behalf of the RA shall be applied to further the aims and objectives of the RA and for no other purpose. The Committee are responsible for the proper use of monies raised through grants according to the guidelines issued by the funding body.

- 10.6 Use of the RA bank debit card (if any) can only be used with prior approval of the Committee.
- 10.7 No money shall be paid for any purchased item without a proper receipt.
- 10.8 Any expenditure below £50 can be paid with the Treasurer’s discretion. Any amount above £50 will be agreed by the Committee and presented in the Treasurer’s report.

11. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 11.1 The constitution can only be altered at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) called specifically for that purpose. Notice for an EGM is 21 days.
- 11.2 A member who wishes to alter the Constitution must send to the Secretary the wording of the proposed alteration in writing (email will suffice) at least 30 days prior to the AGM.
- 11.3 Any alteration(s) or changes to the constitution may be agreed by a simple majority of the members present at the meeting.

12. DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

- 12.1 If the RA is to be dissolved it must occur at an Extraordinary General Meeting called specifically to consider a motion to dissolve the RA.
- 12.2 All members shall be given 21 days’ notice of such a meeting via the Website, which shall contain the wording of the resolution.
- 12.3 The RA shall only be dissolved if there is a simple majority of the members present at the meeting who vote for the motion to dissolve it.
- 12.4 The Extraordinary General Meeting shall also decide upon the disposal of the RA's assets. Any remaining grant funding shall be returned to the originator. Any other remaining funds will be donated to a local charity agreed by members of the RA.

This constitution was adopted by the Committee of Hinchingsbrooke Residents Association.

SIGNATURE (Chair)

DATE:

Appendix 1

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Hinchingsbrooke Residents Association is committed to the fullest possible participation of all its members in the meetings and activities of the RA.

A key feature of the RA's commitment to participation is the value it places upon the knowledge and skills that each member brings with them to share with others at meetings, in particular their involvement, and experiences from their everyday lives. Therefore, it is important that everyone is made to feel safe, equal, and able to make a positive contribution to the group.

Everyone has an equal right to benefit from, contribute to, and enjoy the involvement in activities of the RA. Members of the RA must adhere to these principles, and these guidelines will assist with achieving the RA's aims and objectives.

General Governance

- All relevant personal and financial interests must be declared to the Secretary
- Members should use RA funds and resources honestly and appropriately
- Members should not use their position or role within their RA for personal gain or leverage
- Members should read agenda papers (if any) of a meeting in advance
- Members should accept collective responsibility for the decisions taken at a meeting
- Members should ensure the RA is compliant with GDPR guidelines and handles personal data correctly

During a Meeting or Event

This RA requires its members to adopt and follow the following code of conduct:

- Mobile phones must be put on silent or turned off during meetings
- Listen to what other people have to say, and avoid being dismissive of their contribution
- Speak in a polite and respectful manner; avoid using rude, obscene or abusive language
- Do not use offensive or discriminatory language
- Wait until a speaker has finished, and allow people to speak without interruption
- Ensure that everyone who wishes to speak is given the encouragement and the opportunity to do so
- Make your own contribution by responding to the matter at hand or by way of a question
- Ensure that personal or sensitive information is restricted to the meeting and members' confidentiality is always respected
- Adhere to the Safeguarding Policy (Appendix 2)
- Must not bring the good name of the RA into disrepute.
- Cooperate with the Chair by keeping to the agenda and the time allocated for the meeting/agenda items
- Respect the authority of the Chair and accept that their decision is final
- The Chair should be impartial and neutral
- If the Chair does not abide by the Code of Conduct, a committee member can warn that the Chair will be asked to leave the meeting if the behaviour recurs

Working in Partnership with the Council and other External Agencies

The RA requires that when organising or attending an RA meeting or event, its members:

- Foster and maintain a productive and respectful working relationship with council staff and other external agencies, and observe this Code of Conduct in relation to attitude and behaviour
- Ensure at least 14 days' notice is given when inviting Council staff or External Agencies to meetings
- Ensure there is a single point of contact within the RA on issues to avoid confusion, particularly if the RA has an email address with multiple users
- Allow Council staff and External Agencies to respond to queries within the usual service standards
- Provide Council staff and External Agencies with timely updates on relevant issues being discussed and communicate minutes from meetings and AGM minutes where relevant and appropriate. This can be via publication on the RA website.

Breach of the Code of Conduct

- A member who feels that the Code of Conduct has been ignored by another should raise this concern with the Chair either at the time, or immediately after the meeting or event with any Committee member. If the Chair agrees that the Code of Conduct has been ignored, they should advise the member accordingly and state that such behaviour is unacceptable.
- If the member in question continues to ignore the Code of Conduct, the Chair will put to the meeting a motion that the member be asked to leave the meeting immediately, with the possibility of no longer participating in the RA if their behaviour continues.
- Where a serious breach of the Code of Conduct occurs at a meeting, such as behaving in a threatening or aggressive manner, the member can be asked to leave the meeting immediately.
- If there are any persistent breaches of the Code of Conduct the Chair and other Committee Members will consider a suitable course of action which can include a time-limited suspension from the RA's activities, or a permanent ban from all RA activities.
- Membership can be suspended or ended by a simple majority vote of the Committee, if the offender is a member of the Committee they will not be entitled to a vote.
- If an allegation of misconduct is made against the Chair of the RA, the above procedure will apply but the Vice-Chair will take the appropriate action.

Appendix 2

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Hinchingsbrooke Residents Association is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

This policy aims to ensure the safety of those undertaking activities on behalf of the RA and any children and vulnerable adults involved.

The RA has a duty of care to ensure that it fosters an environment where everyone is able to participate safely, and that events do not expose any participants to unnecessary risk.

The Children Act, 1989 defines a child as being up to the age of 18 years old. The Association's membership is open to all over the age of 18.

Where children are in attendance at any of the RA's meetings or events then they must always be accompanied by their parents or guardians and that those responsible adults oversee their involvement in the RA's activities.

A vulnerable adult can be regarded as anyone over the age of 18 years who may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, harm or exploitation, which may be by reason of illness, age, mental illness, disability or other types of physical or mental impairment.

Where vulnerable adults are involved in the RA's membership or events then they must be accompanied by their carer or other responsible person for the duration of their involvement.

If the RA's Committee includes members who have DBS clearance as part of their day-to-day work there is still a requirement for parents, guardians or carers to take responsibility for the welfare and safety of their children or any vulnerable adults.

It is the responsibility of ALL the RA members to ensure the effective application of this policy.

In the event of an issue or concern about the safeguarding of individuals then these should be referred to the Chair of the RA in the first instance or, in the event of possible conflict of interest, to another member of the Committee.

Where concerns are drawn to the attention of the Chair or Committee it will make every effort to ensure their investigation in a timely manner by the appropriate agencies, and respect confidentiality when it does so.

Participants in RA events will be encouraged to bring any concerns to the attention of the RA Committee as soon as possible and will be assured that they will be investigated.

Records of any concerns and their subsequent investigation will be held securely and only shared with statutory agencies.

Appendix 3

AREA of BENEFIT - list of street names:

Bliss Close
Bloomfield Drive
Bocking Close
Bradley Road
Brecon Way
Christie Drive
Cromwell Drive
Dartmoor Drive
Dyson Close
Exmoor Close
Flamsteed Drive
Halley Close
Home Farm Cottages
Meadow Rise
Parkway
Peaks Court
Pond Close
Snowdonia Way
The Copse
The Glades
The Poplars
The Shrubbery
The Vale
Woodlands