Alnwick Area Friends of the Earth

Constitution

Name and Location

1. The name of the group is 'Alnwick Area Friends of the Earth' (henceforth referred to as 'the group').
2. The group works primarily within Northumberland, in particular, Alnwick and its surrounding communities.
3. The group is based in England and is subject to the laws of England and Wales.
4. The group operates within the terms of the Partnership Agreement and Trade Mark Licence Agreement agreed by the group and Friends of the Earth England, Wales, and Northern Ireland (henceforth referred to as 'FoE EWNI').

Aims, Objectives, and Powers

5. The aims of the group are:

   (i) to help protect and sustain the natural environment in the Alnwick area and the world;

   (ii) to help create a sustainable future for communities and individuals in the Alnwick area and the world.

6. The objects of the group are:

   (i) to campaign locally and, where appropriate, nationally and internationally, on environmental issues including, but not limited to, climate change, pollution, waste, transport, energy, wildlife, and habitat;

   (ii) to raise awareness of both local and global environmental issues that affect Northumberland;

   (iii) to offer advice, support, and education on environmental issues and solutions;

   (iv) to work with local and, where appropriate, national and international partners to help create a cleaner, greener Northumberland.

7. To further its aims and objects, the group may:

   (i) raise funds and invite and receive contributions;

   (ii) apply for grants or other sources of revenue from voluntary or statutory grant-making bodies;

(iii) open a bank or building society account or accounts in the name specified above, provided that:

a. at least two of the committee members are signatories to the account

b. that all withdrawals from the account are authorised by at least two signatories;

(iv) disburse available funds to individuals or groups for purposes which directly contribute to the group's aims;

(v) buy, rent, or take lease in or exchange any property and maintain and equip it for use and/or buy, rent, or take lease in any services necessary for the achievement of the objects;

(vi) subject to any consents required by law to sell, lease, or dispose of all or any part of the property of the organisation;

(vii) co-operate with and/or affiliate to voluntary bodies, charities, and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the objects or of similar purposes and exchange information and advice with them;

(viii) publish material in physical or electronic form which may include, but is not limited to, print, a website, social media, or any other means that may be developed in future;

(ix) do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the aims and objects.

8. The group is not aligned with any political party or religious organisation.

9. The group will adopt or develop policies as appropriate, which may include, but are not limited to:

(i) the protection of children, young people, and vulnerable adults;

(ii) diversity and inclusion;

(iii) data protection.

Membership

10. Membership of the group is open to any person supporting the aims and objectives of the group.

11. Members shall be defined as those individuals who have made available to the group an electronic or postal address where they can be contacted. The group will maintain a list of members for this purpose.

12. Membership fees, if any, shall be determined by the Annual General Meeting of the group.

13. Membership is open to all persons without discrimination and the group will not discriminate against anyone in its practices.

14. Only members may vote at meetings of the group. Membership is provisional for 28 full days after making available an electronic or postal address to the group. Provisional members may not vote in business meetings or general meetings, nor may they stand for office.

15. Members of the group will comply with all relevant group policies as defined in Paragraph 9.

16. The group has the right and responsibility to suspend or expel a member who has contravened the licence agreement with FoE EWNI, or brought the name of the local group

into disrepute, or has been found to have worked against the aims of the group. Such a decision can only be made by quorum decision at a general meeting of the group, after at least one month's notice has been given to all members.

17. Each member has the right and responsibility to call the attention of FoE EWNI to any of the group's activities which in his/her view contravene the licence agreement, provided s/he has the written support of at least two other members of the group.

Meetings

18. The group will hold regular committee meetings open to all members. The venue, time, and frequency of these meetings will be agreed by the group.

19. The group will hold an Annual General Meeting open to all members. The business of the AGM will be:

    (i) to hear annual reports from the group's committee;

    (ii) to receive and approve the annual accounts of the group;

    (iii) to elect, or re-elect, the committee;

    (iv) to consider any proposals for changes to the constitution;

    (v) to conduct any other business of an annual nature;

    (vi) to set the date of the following year's AGM.

20. If circumstances require it, the group may hold an Extraordinary General Meeting open to all members. An EGM may be called at the request of 25% of the current members or at least three of the committee. Members must be given one month's notice of an EGM. An EGM will be chaired by the National FoE EWNI liaison member, the Treasurer if the Liaison Member is unable or unwilling to chair, or another committee member if neither is able or willing to chair. The business of an EGM will be determined by the chair of the meeting who may request reports from the group's committee members, call for election of committee members, or conduct any other business of an extraordinary nature.

21. Agreement at meetings may be by consensus of the members present. Alternatively, the chair of the meeting or any member present at the meeting may call for a vote. Motions put to the vote should be proposed and seconded. Voting is by show of hands and the winner is determined by a simple majority of the number of votes cast. In the event of a tie, the chair of the meeting has the casting vote. Separate rules for elections of committee members are specified in Paragraph 33.

22. Minutes will be kept of all business and general meetings and may be made available to the group's members on request.

23. Committee meetings will be quorate when at least four committee members are present. General meetings will be quorate when at least eight members are present. At least four of the committee must be present for a general meeting to be quorate.

24. The group may from time to time call public meetings for the purposes of information, debate, or any other lawful purpose in pursuit of the objects of the group. Business will not normally be conducted at such meetings.

Committee

25. The group shall have a management committee consisting of a minimum of four elected committee members to cover key responsibilities, which number shall include a National FoE EWNI liaison member and a Treasurer, both of whom shall be chosen by the committee. Other responsibilities will be shared and/or rotated as necessary. The duties of the committee include, but are not limited to:

    (i) managing the finances of the group and keeping accounts;

    (ii) ensuring that meetings are chaired efficiently and that minutes are taken;

    (iii) maintaining effective communication between the committee and members of the group and reporting to the group on the committee's activities;

    (iv) answering queries from the public and external groups and maintaining the group's communications media;

    (v) liaising with FoE EWNI, providing them with such information as may be required under the terms of the licence agreement, and communicating appropriate national activities to local group members;

    (iv) undertaking all other such lawful activities required for the efficient management of the group.

26. The minimum age at which people can act as members of the committee is sixteen.

27. To assist them with their duties, committee members may delegate responsibilities to individual members or to subgroups constituted for specific purposes. Such groups or individuals may be required to report to business and general meetings.

28. The committee may from time to time meet or confer as a subgroup to discuss policy or activities or in exceptional circumstances to take emergency action or to fill vacancies. Any such actions may be subject to ratification by general meetings or open committee meetings.

Elections to the Committee and Term of Office

29. Committee members will be elected or re-elected at general meetings of the group.

30. The term of office for committee members elected at an AGM is one year. Committee members appointed to fill a vacancy or elected at an EGM serve until the next AGM.

31. There are no limits to the number of times a member may be elected or re-elected to the committee.

32. Any member of the group may stand for election to the committee provided they are not a provisional member and have met the membership criteria in Paragraphs 10–17 of the constitution.

33. The procedure for election of committee members at a general meeting is as follows:

    (i) members must be informed of the date, time, and venue of the meeting at least one month in advance. This should include information about the election procedure.

    (ii) when asked by the chair at the appropriate point in the meeting, members wishing to stand must indicate their willingness to stand for election. Members unable to attend may indicate their willingness to stand in advance of the meeting by informing the chair of the meeting either verbally or in writing;

(iii) members willing to stand should be proposed and seconded;

(iv) candidates assume office immediately after election.

Vacancies

34. A vacancy arises when a committee member resigns, is unable to act due to death or incapacity, or is expelled from the group.

35. Committee members may resign by informing the committee via at least one other committee member, either verbally or in writing.

36. Vacancies may be filled by agreement at a business meeting or if urgent by agreement among the remaining committee members, subject to ratification at the next business meeting.

Dissolution

37. The group may be wound up by a vote at an Annual General Meeting or by an Extraordinary General Meeting called for that purpose. Notice of intention to wind up the group must be sent to all members and FoE EWNI at least one month before any such meeting. At the meeting where it is decided to wind up the group, a decision shall also be taken as to what shall be done with any remaining funds. In the event of a decision not being taken, the money will revert to Friends of the Earth Limited.

Amendments to the Constitution

38. The constitution may be amended by a general meeting provided that the meeting is quorate and the amendment is agreed by a two-thirds majority of those present.

39. A new constitution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption by the membership at a general meeting.

Adoption

This constitution was adopted at a meeting of the group on 12 October 2020, online via Zoom, attended by: Lisa Bellamy, Brycchan Carey, Peter Edge, Jan Maddison, Gillian Maude, Sue Patience, Mike Powell, Eve Reverchon, Terry Smith.