

June 2020

## Constitution

### 1) Preamble

North-west Bermondsey today is a rapidly changing and exciting area of London, and there's never been a greater need for good local planning to safeguard and improve the quality of community life.

### 2) Objectives

Old Bermondsey Neighbourhood Forum ('the Group') was established to help local residents and businesses achieve genuine influence over planning policy, and by producing a Neighbourhood Plan it aims to highlight the importance of the built environment in the area that Southwark Council approved as a Neighbourhood Area (and designated 'Area A'). The Group has adopted for Area A the name 'Old Bermondsey Village'.

The Group is dedicated to achieving this objective, and specifically wants to ensure that local people gain a real voice in the planning process through the new provisions contained in the Localism Act. By such means the Group will pursue its primary objectives of promoting and improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Old Bermondsey Village area. Stress is placed on listening to the views of the diverse local community, and incorporating these into the Group's working agenda.

### 3) Structure and Governance

The objectives of the Group are to engage local people as fully as possible in the evolution of the character of the area in so far as this can be achieved through planning policy. Accordingly, it is an overriding principle to make the group and its activity open to everyone and to minimise any organisational obstacles to free participation by all. A minimal organisational structure is therefore preferable to a cumbersome or inhibitory one. It is not intended that the Group will be a vehicle for party politics.

### 4) Membership

- a) Membership shall be open to all, irrespective of sex, sexual orientation, nationality, age, disability and race or of political, religious or other opinions.
- b) Membership is open to anyone with an interest in the activities of the Group and who lives, works or is an elected member of Southwark Council whose ward is wholly or partly within the Old Bermondsey Village area.
- c) Life membership (or for so long as the requirements of (b) are met) is available to any such person who gives a postal address and pays a subscription.
- d) Membership shall also be available to organisations of all types who are located in the area in so far as they wish to be represented in their organisational capacity rather than as individuals.
- e) Members will therefore comprise:
  - (i) Individuals who live in the designated neighbourhood area.
  - (ii) Individuals who work in the designated neighbourhood area.
  - (iii) Individuals who are elected members of the Council whose ward falls wholly or partially within the designated neighbourhood area.
  - (iv) Residents associations, tenants associations or housing co-operatives operating in the designated neighbourhood area that support the objectives of the Group.

3

- (v) Businesses or organisations of any sort where the organisation concerned prefers to have organisational membership rather than individual memberships.
  
- f) In case of clause 4)(d) above, each member organisation shall appoint one individual person being a member thereof to represent it and vote on its behalf at general meetings of the Group and may appoint an alternate being a member thereof to replace its appointed representative as an observer at such meetings if the appointed representative is unable to attend. In the event of such individual person resigning or leaving a member organisation he or she shall forthwith cease to be a representative thereof. The member organisation concerned shall have the right to appoint a new representative, informing the Secretary in writing.
  
- g) Individual members qualifying under Clause 4)(a)-(c) above or appointed as voting representatives under Clause 4(d) and (f) shall be 'registered members' .
  
- h) Any registered member of the Group may resign his/her membership by giving notice to that effect to the Secretary.

## **5) Subscribers to the Group mailing list**

Subscription is free to all who register to the mailing list online or at meetings or workshops.

## **6) Meetings**

- a) General meetings are open to all, whether they be registered members, subscribers or non-members, and the Chair will ensure that proceedings are conducted in a fair, open and orderly manner.
  
- b) Any registered member may call a general meeting by written request to the Secretary stating the matter for which the meeting is to be called. The Secretary shall duly call a meeting by issuing a notice to all members and subscribers, giving not less than seven days notice except in a case of urgent business.

- c) Ten registered members eligible to vote or one third of the registered members, whichever is the less, shall form a quorum at general meetings of the Group. In the event that no quorum is present at a general meeting of the Group, or the meeting has to be abandoned, the meeting shall stand adjourned and be reconvened 14 days later, and those members with power to vote present at that meeting shall be deemed to form a quorum.

## **7) Voting**

All questions arising at general meetings of the Group shall be decided by a majority of those present, all of whom shall have a vote, and unless the result of such a vote is challenged by three or more of those present. In the event of such a challenge there will be a new vote, eligibility for which will be confined to registered members and decisions will be made by majority vote of members present subject to a quorum of 10. No member shall exercise more than one vote but in case of an equality of votes the Chair shall have a second or casting vote. Constitutional amendments may be made by members only by a two-thirds majority vote. Whilst anyone regardless of age will be welcome at meetings, only those of local (parliamentary) election voting age will be permitted to vote.

## **8) Decisions and Policy**

Key decisions and policies of the Group, which must always be in conformity with the Group's objectives, will be determined by a vote at a general meeting as specified at 7) above.

## **9) Officers**

- a) At its first meeting every year, the group shall elect from among its members a General Coordinator/Chair, a Vice Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer.
- b) An Officer shall cease to hold office if he/she notifies the Secretary of the Group in writing of his/her resignation.

5

- c) If a vacancy occurs by death, resignation or disqualification among the Officers of the Group, the group shall fill it from among its members.
- d) Subject to the above, all Officers shall hold office until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Group and shall be eligible for re-election.
- e) The General Coordinator (in consultation with other officers whenever possible) shall have authority to carry on day to day business on behalf of the group.

## **10) Special Officers**

- a) The group will adopt Special Officers only as necessary for particular activities that might require such from time to time.
- b) Such Special Officers might include special coordinators, legal representatives, advisers or other categories as necessary.
- c) Adoption of Special Officers will be by a vote of members at a general meeting in the event of a selection being required from multiple candidates.
- d) A Special Officer shall cease to hold office if he/she notifies the Secretary in writing of his/her resignation.

## **11) Finance**

- a) All money raised by or on behalf of the Group shall be applied to further the objects of the Group and for no other purpose, provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the payment in good faith of reasonable and proper remuneration to any employee of the Group or the repayment of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the Group by employees and volunteers.
- b) An account shall be opened in the name of the Group at a bank or other suitable financial institution. Two officers must sign cheques on behalf of the Group where the sum exceeds £1000.

## **12) Dissolution**

If a General Meeting decides at any time that on the ground of expense or otherwise it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Group, members and subscribers will be given at least fourteen days' notice by email of a General Meeting for the purpose of considering a resolution to wind up. If such a resolution is confirmed by the ordinary procedures of a

6

GM the Officers, in consultation with the members, shall have authority to dispose of any assets held by the Group and any assets remaining after payment of any debts shall be returned to donors in the ratio in which they supported the Group during the last year of its existence.

**Adopted by General meeting held on 18 February 2015**

**Updated in June 2020 to account for name change from OBVNF/OBF to OBNF**