

# Whitfield Lane South Petherton Allotments Society Constitution

The Constitution is provided to set out the structure and processes necessary to run the Whitfield Lane South Petherton Allotment Society. The Constitution is reviewed annually at the Annual General Meeting. Any proposed changes should be forwarded in writing to the Allotment Management Committee Secretary

Reviewed: November 2023

Next Review: November 2024

1. **The Name of the Society** shall be the Whitfield Lane South Petherton Allotment Society. This shall be used in all official correspondence.
2. **The Objectives of the society shall be:**
  - a. To promote the interests of the plot holders with regard to proper cultivation, good management, health and wellbeing, community fellowship and enjoyment of the allotments.
  - b. To maintain and improve the facilities and the condition of the site and to encourage and educate others to do the same.
  - c. To promote and encourage plot holders to cultivate the site with respect to the environment and the surrounding area through management of water use and recycling/composting as far as reasonably practical.
  - d. To ensure that as many plots as possible are tended.
  - e. To manage the allotment site responsibly, respecting the environment and the constitution and rules of the society.
  - f. To be inclusive and non-political, religious, racial, or discriminatory.
  - g. To work with South Petherton Parish Council (SPPC) and other organisations and individuals in furtherance of the society's objectives.
3. **Management and Governance**
  - a. SPPC are the landlords, and the eligible tenants (hereafter plot holders) are members of the South Petherton Parish and over the age of 18 years.
  - b. Governance of the society shall be vested in the General Meetings.
  - c. The plot holders will nominate and elect volunteer Allotment Management Committee (AMC) members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). A meeting quorum of ten plot holders is required. If less than ten plot holders meeting can still be held but decisions cannot be taken.
  - d. The AMC will manage the day-to-day business and administration of the allotments on behalf of SPPC and in accordance with the objectives, constitution, and rules of the society.
  - e. The AMC shall consist of the officers of a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer and at least two other plot holders. The roles and responsibilities of these officers are appended.
  - f. AMC membership will be reviewed annually at the AGM.
  - g. No plot holder can be a member of the AMC for more than three consecutive years unless exceptional circumstances prevail.
  - h. The AMC shall have the power to appoint a plot holder to fill any vacancy that may occur between AGMs or to co-opt non-voting plot holders with prior communication to the membership inviting nominations.
  - i. In exceptional circumstances, following 21 days' written notice of a specific agenda item, AMC member(s) may be dismissed by majority vote by the Society Members at a General Meeting, Extraordinary Meeting (EGM) or AGM, with a quorum of ten.
  - j. The AMC can vote to remove a member of the committee by a simple majority once any issues or conflict has been openly discussed.
  - k. The work of the Committee shall be voluntary, unpaid, and open only to plot holders of the society.

- l. The AMC shall meet no less than four times a year and keep records of their meetings. A quorum of four members is required.
- m. An AGM shall be held each year during the month of April, at least 21 days' notice shall be given to plot holders.
- n. A second meeting in the year can be called during the month of October giving plot holders 21 days' notice this will be known as a General Meeting.
- o. Resolutions for discussion at the AGM must be submitted to the Secretary at least 7 working days before the meeting to allow preparation for the meeting and issue of the agenda to the plot holders.
- p. Only items on the agenda will be discussed at the AGM, however, the Chairperson may allow other discussions to take place but reserves the right to defer any such discussion until a subsequent meeting.
- q. Decisions and actions from meetings shall be agreed by a majority vote (one vote per tenancy agreement), the chair will have a casting vote in addition to their individual vote. Draft minutes of the meeting will be circulated no later than 21 days after the meeting.
- r. An EGM may be called, with 21 days' notice, on the direction of the AMC, or by five plot holders, and notice delivered to the Secretary. Only matters raised for calling an EGM will be discussed at these meetings. The meeting shall be called within four weeks of receipt of the request. Failure to call the meeting will allow the requesting plot holders to call a meeting themselves.
- s. The Treasurer shall submit written accounts (summary of petty cash income and spend) for the year at the AGM.
- t. The Secretary's report shall be submitted at the AGM.
- u. The constitution and rules shall be reviewed and updated at the AGM.
- v. Plot holder's personal data held by the AMC will only be used by the AMC for the purpose of communication.

#### **4. Waiting List and Allocations**

- a. A waiting list for plots shall be administered by a member of the AMC on behalf of SPPC. Plots will be allocated on a first come first served basis. The list should include dates of the request and allocation plus the applicants' contact details.
- b. When a plot becomes available the next on the list will be given the opportunity to accept or defer. If they defer, they remain at the top of the list.
- c. In a situation when a current plot holder is finding it difficult to maintain a plot and agrees to sharing then the next on the waiting list shall be given the opportunity to share with the view to eventually taking over the plot or to share and remain top of the list until a more suitable plot becomes available.
- d. In a situation where a plot holders circumstances change, and it is unlikely they will be able to maintain the plot for the foreseeable future they can be asked to give up the plot and go back on the waiting list.
- e. The number of half plots allocated to a single plot holder will be reviewed periodically and will depend on the demand for plots. During periods of low demand people who have successfully cultivated a half plot for 12 months can request a second half plot and will be added to the waiting list until a suitable plot becomes available.

#### **5. Finance**

- a. Funds raised by the AMC and plot holders shall be held as petty cash by the AMC treasurer in the Allotment Society Bank Account, and the AMC will have authority to spend this in line with the Society Constitution.
- b. Funds held in the Allotment Society Bank Account will be used for expenditures for the shared benefit of all plot holders (refreshments at meetings, shared assets such as tools and equipment)
- c. **Rent paid to SPPC will be used to fund the Council's allotment maintenance responsibilities as detailed in the Letter of Understanding. This includes all grass cutting as indicated in Appendix II, the cost of which will be determined by the grass cutting contract awarded by the Parish Council. It also includes maintenance of the boundary fences & hedges.**
- d. **The AMC may request additional funds from the ring-fenced account if/when any large spend/projects for the allotments are identified by the Society.**
- e. **Rent which plot holders pay will be annually determined by SPPC in consultation with the AMC with any changes to be made at the next rent collection (September).**
- f. Society assets will be held by the treasurer and reported at the AGM.

## **6. Complaints and Disputes**

- a. Complaints and disputes should initially be dealt with between the relevant parties. If resolution is not achieved, then the subject complaint should be brought to the attention of the committee via a formal written letter to the Secretary.
- b. Plot holders may notify the AMC verbally or in writing of any perceived breach of the constitution or rules at any time. The AMC will take appropriate action on receipt of any complaint.
- c. If disputes arise which cannot be resolved amicably then arbitration can be used. One arbitrator shall be appointed by each of the parties concerned and one by the AMC. The decision of the arbitrators will be final, and any cost will be shared by the parties as determined by the arbitrators.
- d. Plot holders or aggrieved parties not satisfied with the arbitrator's decision can escalate the issue to SPPC.
- e. The AMC will advise the SPPC to issue a notice to quit to plot holders who repeatedly do not abide by the constitution and rules. SPPC have the reserve the right to make the final decision.

## **7. Dissolution**

- a. The society can be dissolved at an AGM or EGM by an affirmative vote to this effect of at least three quarters of the plot holders present and voting.
- b. The disposals of any assets are to be agreed at any such meeting and any monies raised are to be used to settle the debts and liabilities of the society.
- c. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, including those items and assets advanced or on loan, shall not be paid to or distributed among the plot holders of the society. Remaining assets shall be donated to SPPC.

## **Related Documents**

Whitfield Lane South Petherton Allotments Society Tenancy Agreement

Whitfield Lane South Petherton Allotment Society Constitution

Whitfield Lane South Petherton Allotment Society Rules

Appendix I – Map of Whitfield Lane Allotments – Nov 2023

Appendix II – Map of Grass cutting requirements – Nov 2023

## **APPENDIX**

### **AMC Roles and responsibilities:**

- i. Chairperson will coordinate the activities of the AMC and chair any meeting and when necessary, liaise with SPPC, the SPPC Appointed representative and other organisation. Is a signatory for the society.
- ii. Secretary will support the chairperson by taking minutes of meetings, keeping records and be the focal point for incoming and outgoing correspondence. Is a signatory for the society.
- iii. The Treasurer will work with the SPPC clerk to keep the accounts and manage any funds raised by the society as petty cash. A list of plot holders and their contact details will be maintained with dates of commencement, rent paid and leaving.
- iv. Other members of the AMC shall be allocated tasks such as site maintenance, waiting list and allocations, seed club, newsletters etc.
- v. Waiting List and Allocations role includes the maintaining of a waiting list for allotment plots. Allocating available plots by introducing the tenant to the plot, taking contact details, starting date and briefing the tenant on the tenancy agreement and other documents. The role requires liaison with the council regarding new tenants and leavers.

### **Society Assets:**

- i. Security cameras (2) with plot holder Diane Kingston and Kevin Entwistle
- ii. Strimmer's (2) with plot holder Kevin Entwistle
- iii. Gazebo with plot holder Kevin Entwistle
- iv. Fencing Tool with plot holder Kevin Entwistle
- v. Miscellaneous open day and meeting equipment (Glasses, Stationary, etc with Plot holder Kevin Entwistle