

Ottershaw Neighbourhood Forum Constitution

1 Name & Area

- a) The Ottershaw Neighbourhood Forum ('the Forum') is a neighbourhood forum as defined in the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 ('the Act').
- b) The Forum shall cover the Area shown on the attached map known as Ottershaw (Annex A).

2 Forum Objectives

The objectives of the Forum shall be to:

- a) promote social, economic and environmental well-being of the Area,
- b) produce a Neighbourhood Plan which reflects the wishes of its community,
- c) provide opportunities to influence local decision making,
- d) encourage openness and transparency between all organisations about the services and plans for the Area,
- e) promote community cohesion,
- f) seek to make the area more sustainable, protect the natural environment & the green belt, and maintain green corridors between built areas.
- g) maximise benefits to the area arising from envisaged national environmental initiatives embraced by the Green Agenda,
- h) seek to make improvements to the street environment,
- i) undertake any activities permitted by the relevant Neighbourhood planning provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations April 2012 and to exercise any powers which attach to the Forum as a designated forum.
- j) ensure the Neighbourhood Plan:
 - i. is in general conformity with the Council's adopted Local Plan and in due course with the emerging Local Plan,
 - ii. has regard to national planning policy and guidance,
 - iii. contributes to the achievement of sustainable development, including but not limited to renewable and green energy, cycling, walking and public transport.

3 Membership

- a) Membership of the Forum is open to all:
 - i. individuals who live in the Area,
 - ii. individuals who work and are based in the Area (whether for businesses carried out there or otherwise),
 - iii. individuals who are elected Members of Parliament, members of Surrey County Council ('SCC') or Runnymede Borough Council ('RBC') whose constituency / ward includes any part of the Area,
 - iv. businesses or other bodies or organisations e.g. education, health services, churches, charities, societies, landowners, etc, which operate in the Area, through their appointed representatives.
- b) Anyone who supports the aims and objectives of the Forum and within the scope of 3a shall be able to apply for membership by contacting the Membership Secretary and completing the required documentation.
- c) The Forum shall have a minimum of 21 members.
- d) Individuals eligible for membership under more than one category listed at 3a shall only be able to exercise one vote.
- e) Members may resign from the Forum by giving notice (by e-mail or in writing) to the Forum Secretary.
- f) Associate Membership of the Forum is open to individuals, businesses or other bodies or organisations on invitation by the Committee.
 - i. Anyone invited by the Committee to join as an Associate Member shall complete the required documentation.
 - ii. Attendance of Associate Members at a Forum meeting does not count towards a quorum for the meeting.
 - iii. Associate Members have no voting rights at any Forum meeting.
 - iv. Associate Members have no right to stand for Committee roles.
- g) Membership is not transferable.
- h) Forum Members are required to identify and consider any personal, financial or pecuniary conflicts of interest that have arisen or may arise in the future and notify the Committee as soon as is possible.
 - i. Any declared conflict shall be recorded in a register of interest.
 - ii. The concerned member shall not be entitled to participate in the debate or to vote in respect of matters in which they have declared a conflict of interest.

4 Steering Committee

- a) The Forum shall be managed by a Steering Committee ('the Committee') comprising of no less than five (5) and no more than ten (10) members of the Forum.
- b) The Committee shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting ('AGM'). There is no limit to the number of terms an officer may serve.
- c) The Committee shall appoint the following officers (for role descriptions see Annex B):
 - (i) Chair (and Deputy Chair) (elected SC members),
 - (ii) Treasurer (and Deputy Treasurer) (elected SC members),
 - (iii) Forum Secretary (and Deputy Forum Secretary) (elected SC members),
 - (iv) Membership Secretary,
 - (v) Meeting Secretary,
 - (vi) any additional or replacement officers the Committee deems necessary to carry out the required activities (e.g. Program Manager, Webmaster, etc.)
- d) The appointment of officers (i)-(iv) and their deputies shall occur within sixty (60) days of this Constitution being adopted by the Forum, and thereafter at the first Steering Committee Meeting ('SCM') after each AGM. If a vacancy arises during the year, a replacement shall be elected at the next SCM. A Meeting Secretary will be appointed at the start of each meeting.
- e) Sub-committees and working parties may be appointed by the Committee to carry out specific tasks, to consider policies and to advise the Committee. Such bodies may include individuals appointed within or outside the membership of the Forum.
- f) The Committee is empowered to engage appropriate professional and technical bodies to carry out work.
- g) The Committee shall approve, refuse or terminate all membership / associate membership.
- h) Committee decisions shall be based on a majority vote.

5 Meetings

- a) An Inaugural General Meeting shall take place no later than one (1) month after the formation of the Forum, with the primary objective of electing the Committee.
- b) An Annual General Meeting ('AGM') shall take place no later than three (3) months after the end of the financial year. At least fourteen (14) days' notice shall be given before the AGM.
- c) The Committee shall consider calling a General Meeting ('GM') of the Forum on request from a Forum member to do so. At least fourteen (14) days' notice shall be given before a GM.
- d) The Committee shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting ('EGM') of the Forum within 28 days of a request from a Forum member (if supported by 25% of the Forum members) to do so. At least fourteen (14) days' notice shall be given before an EGM.

- e) All Forum meetings can be conducted remotely.
- f) AGMs, GMs and EGMs shall be open to attendance by any Forum member.
- g) All members are entitled to vote at any AGM, GM and EGM. Members unable to attend may appoint the Chair or any other officer of the Committee to vote on their behalf by sending a notice to one of them (by email or in writing) authorising them to do so.
- h) Steering Committee Meetings ('SCM') shall take place at least quarterly.
- i) A quorum for any SCM shall be a minimum of one half of the total number of Committee Members appointed at the time.
- j) All members of the Committee are entitled to vote at any SCM.
- k) All SCMs shall be open to attendance by any non-committee Forum member. They shall not be permitted to vote, speak or intervene except by consent of the Chair.
- l) The Committee reserves the right to exclude observers where a majority of the Committee members present deem this as necessary for the effective conduct of the business of the meeting.
- m) The Chair of an AGM, GM or EGM shall be the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Committee or, if neither is able to attend, the person nominated in advance (by email or in writing) by the Chair.
- n) All AGMs, GMs, EGMs and SCMs shall be minuted.
- o) In case of an equal vote, the Chair (or, in their absence, their appointed deputy), shall have the casting vote.

6 Forum Finances

- a) The Forum shall have the power to raise funds as necessary for its activities, by grant, donation or any other appropriate means.
- b) The Treasurer shall, if required, open one or more bank accounts in the name of the Forum.
- c) The Forum shall be accountable to RBC for grant management.
- d) Non-grant funds acquired by the Forum, including donations, fundraising income, contributions and bequests shall be paid into an account managed by the Committee in the Forum name.
- e) All Funds shall be applied to the objectives of the Forum and for no other purpose.
- f) Signing powers relating to the Forum's bank account(s) shall rest with the Treasurer (and the Deputy Treasurer as and when delegated by the Treasurer).
- g) Any income and expenditure shall be the responsibility of the officers of the Committee who shall be accountable to ensure funds are utilised effectively and that the Forum operates within budget.

- h) An annual financial report shall be produced by the Treasurer and presented at the AGM. The Forum's accounting year shall run from 1 April to 31 March.

7 Neighbourhood Planning

- a) Any decision to submit the Neighbourhood Plan to RBC for their actions to gain approval for the Plan from the individuals and businesses of Ottershaw shall be subject to a majority vote of members present at a GM. The voting quorum shall be a minimum of twenty-one (21) members.
- b) All consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan shall be open to all residents and businesses in the Area.
- c) The Forum shall maintain an evidence base of all its activities to demonstrate transparency through all stages of the neighbourhood planning process.

8 Alterations to the Constitution

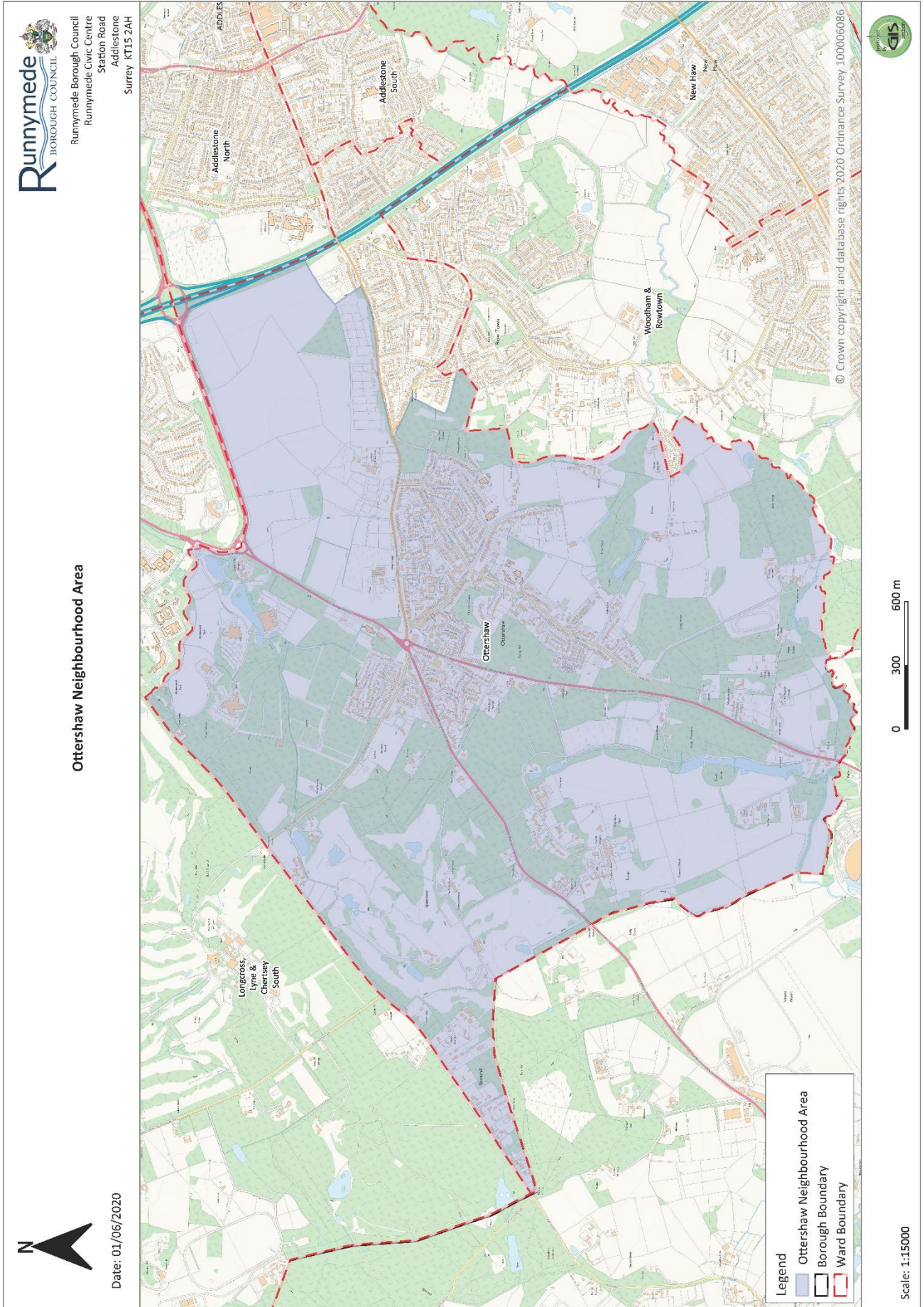
- a) Any changes to this constitution shall be agreed by a majority vote at an AGM / GM / EGM.
- b) Proposed amendments to this constitution by members shall be submitted by email or in writing to the Forum Secretary.

9 Dissolution

- a) The duration of the Forum shall be five (5) years from the Neighbourhood Forum designation date.
- b) The Forum may be dissolved if deemed necessary by its members through a majority vote at an AGM, GM or EGM.
- c) A minimum of twenty-eight (28) days' notice of the proposed dissolution shall be given to the Forum Members.
- d) Following dissolution, any assets or remaining funds after debts have been paid shall be returned to their providers or transferred to local charities or similar groups at the discretion of the Committee.
- e) In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, a formal review of the functions and achievements of the Forum shall be carried out five years after its formal designation by RBC. Following such review, and consultation with its members, the Forum may decide to continue, amend or dissolve itself as considered appropriate.

This Constitution was adopted by the Forum at the AGM on 25th March 2022. It includes amendments to sections 3a, 4c, 4d, 6f and Annex B (Officer roles), of the original constitution adopted by online voting on 9th November 2020.

Annex A - Neighbourhood Area Map



Annex B – Officer Role Descriptions

Chair (and Deputy Chair)

The Chair shall be responsible for:

- directing AGMs, GMs, EGMs and SCMs,
- setting and steering the agenda of AGMs, GMs, EGMs and SCMs,
- the casting vote in case of an equal vote in AGMs, GMs, EGMs and SCMs,
- the work programme,
- the protection of confidentiality,
- addressing known conflicts of interest,
- maintaining an unbiased position during debate to ensure decisions and recommendations are thoroughly vetted and well rounded,
- corporate governance in decision making processes.

Treasurer (and Deputy Treasurer)

The Treasurer shall be responsible for:

- financial oversight,
- presenting budgets, accounts and financial statements,
- funding and fundraising,
- financial planning and budgeting,
- financial reporting,
- banking, book-keeping and record-keeping.

Forum Secretary (and Deputy Forum Secretary)

The Forum Secretary shall be responsible for:

- facilitating the running of AGMs, GMs, EGMs and SCMs,
- distributing notices of AGMs, GMs, EGMs and SCMs,
- following up on minuted actions,
- maintaining the Register of Interests of members,
- managing the Forum Constitution and its implementation

Membership Secretary

The Membership Secretary shall be responsible for:

- validating the eligibility of each member/associate member application,
- maintaining the list of membership.

Meeting Secretary

The Meeting Secretary (appointed in advance of every meeting) shall be responsible for:

- preparing meeting agendas,
- arranging meetings and organising facilities,
- minuting AGMs, GMs, EGMs and SCMs,
- distributing meeting minutes.