

### **Committee Meetings**

Meetings of the committee are held to share information and make decisions and should be governed by the constitution, which can specify the minimum number of Committee members needed to make a decision (quorum) and the minimum number of meetings to be held over a year. All members of the Committee must be given at least 21 days notice of a meeting.

### **General Meetings**

Every year the group will need to have an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The first one being within 15 months of the group setting up. The AGM is a chance for the Committee to tell members what's going on and a chance for the members to hold the Committee accountable. It is also when the annual accounts are presented. The constitution should also allow for other general meetings called special or extraordinary general meetings.

### **Finances**

It is good practice to have a bank account with a minimum of two people who should sign the cheque book. These two people must not be related.

### **Closing down the Group (Dissolution)**

This is a very important clause in the constitution, there must be provision in the constitution to close down the group. A meeting of the membership should be called and a specific majority vote in favour needed. The group must pay all its bills and if there is any money left then it should be given to a group which does similar work in Bolton.

## **3: Further Help**

### **Bolton Community & Voluntary Services (Bolton CVS)**

**Telephone: 01204 546010**

**Fax: 01204 546011**

**Email: mail@boltoncvs.org.uk**

**Website: www.boltoncvs.org.uk**

**Where you can find:  
Bolton CVS  
Health & Care Together  
Volunteer Centre Bolton  
Bolton Community Network**



**The Bolton Hub**

**Bold Street  
Bolton  
BL1 1LS**



Information taken from  
The Green Fish Partnership pack

**Registered Charity: 1003123  
Company Ltd. By Guarantee: 2615057  
Registered in England**

# **CONSTITUTIONS**

## **Bolton Community & Voluntary Services (CVS)**

બોલ્ટન કોમ્યુનીટી અને વોલન્ટરી

بولٹن کمیٹی اور رضاکار سروس

**Bolton communauté et Volontaires Services**

بولتون المجتمع والخدمات التطوعية

**Bolton wspólnota & dobrowolne usługi**

**Bulshada Bolton iyo Hawlaha Iskaada ah**

## **Supporting Voluntary and Community Groups**

## **Promoting Voluntary Action**



## Constitutions

### 1: What is a constitution?

Many voluntary groups are relatively small in terms of the amounts of money and staff that they have.

These organisations are called **Unincorporated Associations**. This is because they are not incorporated (ie, they aren't a registered company) and they are a group of people working together to mutually agreed aims. This type of group has a particular kind of agreement governing how it is run, **A Constitution**. This is a set of agreed rules governing how an organisation will be run, how the members will work together and what they are working towards.

Some groups prefer to remain informal and not adopt a constitution. For others however a constitution is not only an effective tool for running an organisation but actually a requirement because of the activities they are undertaking. For example a group that wishes to register as a charity, or undertake to provide services in a community, or apply for funding will face problems if they do not have a constitution.

A constitution is also a way of ensuring that the public and funding bodies feel confident that a group is being run properly and its money managed properly.

### 2: A constitution must have...

#### **Name**

Choose your own. It might reflect the area or the field in which you work.

#### **Objects**

This section sets out what the group aims to do. If your group wants to register as a Charity then you will need to consider whether or not these objects will fit in with what the Charity Commission defines as Charitable.

## New Definition of 'charity'

The new act defines a charity as a body or trust which:

- is for a charitable purpose, and
- is for the public benefit.

The act updates the preamble to the Charitable Uses act 1601, from which came the current four heads of charity. In its place comes a new list of 12 charitable purposes that more closely resembles modern day expectations of what causes are, or should be charitable. These are:

- a) The prevention or relief of poverty;
- b) The advancement of education;
- c) The advancement of religion;
- d) The advancement of health or the saving of lives;
- e) The advancement of citizenship or community development;
- f) The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science;
- g) The advancement of amateur sport;
- h) The advancement of human right, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity;
- i) The advancement of environmental protection or improvement;
- j) The relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage;
- k) The advancement of animal welfare;
- l) The promotion of the efficiency of the armed forces of the crown; of the efficiency of the police, fire and rescue services or ambulance services, and;
- m) Any others purposes charitable in law.

## **Powers**

This clause allows the organization to undertake the activities necessary in order to achieve its objectives. E.g. the power to employ and pay staff, own land or property, borrow or raise money, and take out most insurances.

## **Membership**

All voluntary organizations, apart from some charitable trusts, will have a membership structure. In legal terms a member is a person or an organization who agrees to abide by the terms of the constitution in return for rights given under that constitution, e.g. the right to vote at general meetings.

## **Management Committee**

This committee has responsibility for management of the group. It is up to the group how many members it has although for most organisations the allowed minimum would be three. There is no maximum but it would make the group unwieldy and inefficient to have too many. There are different types of Committee member:

**ELECTED** - by and from the membership. Most Committee members will be appointed in this way.

**NOMINATED** - by another group

**CO-OPTED** - by the Committee due to their skills/knowledge.

**It is in the interests of the group to ensure that the Committee don't benefit financially from being a Committee member.**

## **Officers**

A Committee has officers who carry out its main jobs. There are usually at least three:

**A Chair**, who ensures meetings run smoothly and decisions are made.

**A Secretary**, who informs everyone of meetings and takes minutes.

**A Treasurer**, who oversees the money of the group and any payments it makes. The treasurer will report to the Committee regularly about this.