

# NORTHSTOWE SUSTAINABILITY GROUP - CONSTITUTION

## 1 Name

The name of the group shall be Northstowe Sustainability Group ("Sustainable Northstowe" here after).

## 2 Object of the Group

**Our vision** is for Northstowe to be a green, clean, biodiverse and interconnected place for current and future residents.

### **Our objectives are:**

(i) To promote the **protection, conservation and the improvement of the environment and the prudent use of resources** for the benefit of the public in and around the town of Northstowe in Cambridgeshire, in particular, but not exclusively, by raising awareness of the local wildlife, climate change, recycling, ~~climate change~~ and other environmental issues, by encouraging practical steps and by implementing local projects to improve biodiversity and reduce negative environmental impact of the new settlement ~~in~~of Northstowe.

(ii) To promote the **circular economy\*** related topics of sustainable and prudent resource use ~~and~~ for the benefit of the public in and around the town of Northstowe ~~in and~~, in particular, but not exclusively, through events and workshops to raise awareness and encourage practical ~~es~~ steps, and by implementing local projects for a transition towards a circular, net zero economy in Northstowe and surrounding area.

\* For the purposes of this clause the circular economy means an alternative to the traditional linear economy ('make, use, dispose') where resources are kept in use for as long as possible, with the maximum value extracted whilst in use, and products and materials recovered and regenerated at the end of each service life.

*We endorse the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals<sup>1</sup> and in particular Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.*

**Our method** is to identify opportunities for collective and individual actions to reduce consumption of energy and resources, and to enhance the community's environment and health, working together with local community groups, local and regional authorities, local businesses and likeminded groups in the surrounding areas.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

### 3 Members

Members shall be those supporting and those benefiting from the activities organised by Sustainable Northstowe who:

- Live in Northstowe or surrounding areas; and
- have explicitly expressed interest in taking part in the group activities.

Membership will begin as soon as interest has been made explicit.

There will be no annual membership fee.

A list of all members will be kept by the membership secretary.

Members may resign at any time in writing to the secretary.

Any offensive behaviour, including racist, sexist or inflammatory remarks, will not be permitted. Anyone behaving in an offensive way or breaking the equal opportunities policy may be asked not to attend further meetings or to resign from the group if an apology is not given or the behaviour is repeated. The individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by the management committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

### 4 Equal Opportunities

Sustainable Northstowe will not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race (including colour, ethnic or national origin), sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious or political belief, pregnancy or maternity, marital status or age.

### 5 Management Committee

The day-to-day administration of the group will be carried out by a Management Committee, elected at the AGM.

The committee shall consist of at least 3 officers (Chair, Treasurer and Secretary) and may include other non-officer members. Officers are voted at the AGM.

The officer roles shall consist of at least:

1. Chair: they shall chair both general and committee meetings
2. Secretary: they shall be responsible for the taking of minutes and distribution of all papers, and keeping records of members and contacts.
3. Treasurer: shall be responsible for maintaining accounts
4. Communication manager

In the event of an officer standing down during the year a replacement will be elected by the next General Meeting of members. An interim replacement may be co-opted at the discretion of the management committee.

The management committee may also include other non-officer roles such as:

5. Community liaison/events
6. Project leads

Non-officer committee members are co-opted at general meetings and ratified at the AGM.

A member of the committee may hold multiple roles, but the roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer shall be held by different people.

Any committee member not attending a general meeting (see section 7) without apology for three months will be contacted by the committee and asked if they wish to resign.

## 6 Annual General Meetings

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held every year, within fifteen months of the previous AGM.

All members will be notified in writing at least 3 weeks before the date of the meeting, giving the venue, date and time, as well as the agenda and information of election of committee members.

Nominations for the committee may be made to the Secretary before the meeting, or at the meeting.

The quorum for the AGM will be 10% of the membership or 7 members, whichever is the greater number.

At the AGM:

- The Committee will present a report of the work of Sustainable Northstowe over the year.
- The Committee will present the accounts for the previous year.
- The officers and Committee for the next year will be elected.
- Any proposals given to the Secretary at least 7 days in advance of the meeting will be discussed (and voted if relevant)

AGM meetings will be open to any member of Sustainable Northstowe wishing to attend, who may speak. All members can vote as long as they have been members of the group for at least 3 months and have attended at least 2 general meetings previously.

AGM meetings are also open to the public wishing to attend, who may speak but not vote. Members of the public wishing to attend or speak may do so by notifying the Secretary at least ~~within~~ 1 week ~~of~~ before the date of the meeting.

In special circumstances such as a national emergency safeguarding public health, the Committee may arrange meetings of the membership online or via teleconferencing.

Members may be allowed to vote by post or electronic mail. The Committee must appoint at least 2 independent people to act as scrutineers to supervise the ballot and counting of votes. Members are to be given 21 days notice of all information related to the vote with a specified closing date. Emails and postal votes are to be returned to an address only accessed by a scrutineer. Scrutineers must make a list of

**Commented [HV1]:** I assume this means one week or more before the date (rather than one week or less)

members casting valid votes and submit these to the committee member overseeing the meeting.

### 6.1 Extraordinary General Meetings

The Secretary will call a Special General Meeting at the request of the majority of the committee or at least eight other members giving a written request to the Chair or Secretary stating the reason for their request.

The meeting will take place within twenty-one days of the request.

All members will be given two weeks notice of such a meeting, giving the venue, date, time and agenda, and notice may be by telephone or email.

The quorum for the Special General Meeting will be 10% of the membership or 10 members, whichever is the greater number.

## 7 General Meetings

General Meetings should be attended by the management committee and are open to all members and will be held at least once every 3 months or more often if necessary.

All members will be given at least two weeks notice of such a meeting, giving the venue, date, time, and notice may be by telephone, email or post. The items in the agenda shall be given at least one week in advance of the meeting.

The quorum for a General Meeting shall be 10% of the membership or 5 members, whichever is the greater number, of which at least 3 should be members of the management committee.

General meetings will be open to any member of Sustainable Northstowe wishing to attend, who may speak. All members can vote as long as they have been members of the group for at least 2 months and have attended at least one general meeting previously.

General meetings may be held by suitable electronic means agreed by the Committee by which each participant may communicate with all the other participants.

## 8 Rules of Procedure for meetings

All questions that arise at any meeting will be discussed openly and the meeting will seek to find general agreement that everyone present can agree to.

If a consensus cannot be reached a vote will be taken and a decision will be made by a simple majority of members present. If the number of votes cast on each side is equal, the chair of the meeting shall have an additional casting vote.

## 9 Finances

The Treasurer shall keep an account of all income and expenditure and report regularly to meetings of the Management Committee.

Three cheque signatories will be nominated by the Committee (one to be the Treasurer). The signatories must not be related nor members of the same household.

All payments will be signed by two of the signatories.

- For cheque payments, the signatories will sign the cheque.
- For other payments (such as BACS payments, cash withdrawals, debit card payments or cash payments), a requisition note will be signed by two signatories, and held by the treasurer.

Records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given at each meeting.

All money raised by or on behalf of the Group is only to be used to further the aims of the group, as specified in item 2 of this constitution.

## 10 Changes to the Constitution

Amendments to the constitution may only be made at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.

Any proposal to amend the constitution must be given to the Secretary in writing. The proposal must then be circulated with the notice of meeting.

Any proposal to amend the constitution will require a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.

## 11 Dissolution of the Scheme

If a meeting, by simple majority, decides that it is necessary to close down the group it may call a Special General Meeting to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the group.

If it is agreed to dissolve the group, all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid, will be donated to a local charitable organisation. The organisation will be agreed at the meeting which agrees the dissolution.

***This constitution was agreed at the Inaugural General Meeting of ~~the~~ Sustainable Northstowe, ~~on~~ by members:***

Carla, Maria, Rocio, Mark, Pratyusha, Chris, ~~Fireuz, Richard, Hugh, Alex, Kirsty, Naveen, Flick~~

***On ~~xxxx~~<sup>26</sup> May 2021***

***(Election of Interim officers until AGM)***

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