

The Ellenbrook Area Residents Association
Constitution

1. The Name

The Organisation shall be known as *The Ellenbrook Area Residents Association* of Hatfield, Hertfordshire (hereafter called the **EARA**)

2. Objectives

In respect of the Residents and the Area defined in Rule 3, the EARA shall have the following objectives:

- a) To stimulate Residents' interest in local affairs.
- b) To protect and strengthen community links.
- c) To represent and promote the interests of Residents on matters affecting them, including housing and environment, community facilities and services in the Area. It is not the objective of EARA to represent individual residents in their disputes unless the Executive Committee consider that such representation would be in the interest of the community as a whole.
- d) To promote social interaction by organising events and activities.

To further these objectives, the EARA, through its committee shall have the following powers:

- a) To publish papers, reports and other literature.
- b) To represent and liaise with bodies including the Local Authority, its Planning Committee, other statutory bodies, local businesses, and local residents' associations.
- c) To hold meetings, lectures, and exhibitions.
- d) To provide general information and advice.
- e) To organise events of an educational, cultural, recreational or social nature.
- f) To raise funds and to invite and receive contributions by way of subscription, donation or otherwise.
- g) To do all such other things as are necessary to attain the objectives.

The Association is established to be independent of any political party or any other body, and will uphold equal opportunities and work towards good relations amongst all members of the community irrespective of tenure. It will specifically prohibit any conduct which discriminates or harasses on grounds of sex, race, colour, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, nationality or political conviction.

These powers are always subject to the proviso that the individual liability of members of the Association shall not exceed the amount of their annual donation.

3. Membership

- a) Membership shall be open to all residents in the Ellenbrook area of Hatfield, Hertfordshire in the borough of Welwyn Hatfield, bounded by St Albans Road West, Wilkins Green Lane, the Comet Way and Ashbury Close.
- b) All voting members must be at least 16 years of age.
- c) Membership shall cease immediately upon a person leaving the area defined in paragraph 3a except as approved by the Executive Committee.

4. The Committee

- a) The EARA Executive Committee shall be elected at the General Meeting (GM) of the EARA and shall serve for a period of 2 years.
- b) The Executive Committee shall consist of at least 8 members (maximum of 12) who shall have the power to co-opt other members onto the committee during the year. All committee members will have voting rights.
- c) The Executive Committee shall elect from within their numbers a Chair, a Vice-Chair a Secretary, a Membership Secretary and a Treasurer. No committee member shall fill more than one position.
- d) The Executive Committee may constitute sub-committees from time to time for such purposes as shall be thought fit. All actions and proceedings of a sub-committee shall be reported to and confirmed by the Executive Committee. Sub-committees

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shall be subordinate to and may be regulated and dissolved by the Executive Committee.

- e) The Executive Committee shall decide the policy of EARA in respect to the objectives and powers defined in Section 2, but shall endeavour to set such policy in open forum of members and with other forms of consultation. It is the policy of the Executive Committee not to make decisions in isolation except in exceptional circumstances. As far as is practicable, the decisions of the Committee shall be made public via e-mail .
- f) The Executive Committee shall have the right to co-opt members as "Area Representatives". Committee meetings to include Area Representatives shall take place at least once every three months and shall be open to any member of EARA who wishes to attend. The Executive Committee shall meet as necessary.
- g) There must be at least four of the Executive members present for any decisions to be made at an Executive Committee meeting.
- h) All communications on policy on behalf of EARA shall be subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.
- i) Non-residents such as Councillors and representatives of other Residents' Associations and local businesses may attend committee meetings as and when invited by the committee.
- j) Committee members can be voted off if they have not attended three consecutive meetings without good reason and have not submitted their apologies.
- k) Committee members must declare any interest they may have in the topic under discussion and the committee will decide if they need to forfeit their right to vote on this occasion

5. Conduct of Business

- a) Members and non-members may speak only through the Chair.
- b) Decisions will be agreed by a simple majority, voted in through a show of hands or a secret ballot. In the event of an equality of votes cast, the Chair shall have a second casting vote.
- c) Meetings will end at the time agreed by the Committee unless all those present agree to extend the meeting.
- d) Any offensive behaviour, including racist, ageist, sexist or inflammatory remarks will not be permitted.
- e) Any member who brings the EARA into disrepute or refuses to comply with the constitution shall be expelled on a majority vote of the full committee. Any such member will have the right to appeal within 28 days of the expulsion. The appeal shall be heard by the membership at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose.
- f) The Secretary or other appointed officer will deal with all correspondence.
- g) Agendas will be distributed to the committee at least four days before a meeting, where possible.
- h) Items for the agenda should be forwarded to the Secretary and Chair seven days before the meeting, where possible.
- i) Minutes will be distributed to the membership within 14 days after a meeting, where possible.

6. Finances

- a) The EARA may raise funds by door-to-door collections (within the area constituting the EARA), obtaining grants from other bodies or by fundraising schemes.
- b) All money raised by or on behalf of the EARA shall be applied to further its objectives.
- c) All funds shall be kept in a bank account that shall be opened in the name of the EARA, plus a nominal amount in petty cash.
- d) All financial correspondence of the EARA including the bank statements will be addressed to the Treasurer.
- e) The signatories will be chosen from the Executive Committee and all cheques shall require at least two of these signatures.

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- f) Accounts shall be kept by the Treasurer, and presented to every committee meeting where they may be inspected.
- g) Failure to present the books to a meeting on three consecutive occasions will mean the Treasurer will be asked to resign.
- h) All expenditure shall be agreed and controlled by the committee. Receipts should be acquired for all expenditure over one pound and retained by the treasurer, normally for 6 years.
- i) All payments over ten pounds shall be made by cheque, not cash. Any exception to this rule shall be discussed and agreed by the committee
- j) No officer shall sign a blank cheque – all cheques to be filled in before signatures are added.
- k) Once a year, the accounts will be independently examined and presented to the Annual General Meeting of the EARA. The Auditor will be from the members of the EARA (not anyone from the Executive committee who has signatory or management responsibilities) appointed by the Committee.

7. Public Meetings

- a) Public meetings of the members shall be held as needed to discuss matters of importance and to keep the members fully informed of the EARA's activities.
- b) All votes shall be decided by a simple majority of the members present, with the Chair holding a casting vote in addition to his/her vote as an attendee.
- c) Any member, having the written support of 20 other members, may request the committee to call a Special Public Meeting of the EARA.
- d) The committee shall call the meeting within 21 days of this written request, with a proviso that a suitable venue is provided by the requester due to very limited resources of the EARA.

8. General Meeting (GM)

- a) A GM shall be held every 2 years to discuss the activities of the EARA, to receive the audited/reviewed accounts and to elect or re-elect the committee.
- b) The quorum for the meeting to take place shall be a minimum of 7 attendees and voting shall be by simple majority of those attending with the Chair holding a casting vote in addition to his/her vote as an attendee
- c) A minimum of 14 days notice shall be given to members of the GM.
- d) At the GM the resignation of all committee members will be accepted and a new committee elected. Existing committee members and officers may stand for re-election.

9. Changes to the Constitution

- a) This constitution shall only be changed at a Special Public Meeting of the EARA, or at the GM.
- b) The quorum for the meeting to take place shall be a minimum of 7 attendees and the voting shall be by simple majority of those attending with the Chair holding a casting vote in addition to his/her vote as an attendee.
- c) As far as is practicable, all members shall be given 14 days notice of the meeting and the proposed changes.
- d) Proposed changes must be submitted to the committee in writing not less than 28 days before the GM. As far as is practicable, all members will be notified of any proposed changes within 14 days of the meeting.

10. Data Protection

- a) The committee will ensure that a register/database of members will be maintained in accordance with the spirit of data protection. Personal information will be kept confidential; it will not be shared with a third party and will not be used for commercial purposes.

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11. Dissolution of the EARA

- a) The EARA may only be dissolved by a special meeting called for that purpose. Such a meeting shall come about following a proposal in writing signed by a simple majority of those remaining on the committee being submitted to the Secretary.
- b) As far as is practicable, all members shall be informed of such a meeting at least 21 days before the date of the meeting.
- c) Dissolution of the EARA shall only take effect if agreed by two thirds of the members present and voting at that meeting.
- d) Any assets remaining after meeting liabilities must be distributed among local charities or other community groups with similar aims of the EARA nominated by that meeting.
- e) Any money received via funding bodies should be returned to the funders in relation to the funding criteria.
- f) On dissolution, any documents belonging to the EARA shall be disposed of in a manner agreed by that meeting.