

CONSTITUTION

1. Name

The name of the group shall be **Friends of Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve**, hereinafter referred to as “the Group”.

2. Aims

- a. To help provide information, guidance and education, and assist Hastings Borough Council (H.B.C.) and other relevant organisations with the management of Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve, hereinafter referred to as “the Reserve”, to fulfil the adopted Management Plan, for the benefit of residents, visitors and people working and studying in the area.
- b. To protect, conserve, promote and enhance the natural environment of the Reserve and encourage others to join us in this work, so that the value of the Reserve and its wildlife is preserved and protected for future generations.

3. Objectives

The Group will fulfil these aims by:

- a. Liaising and working with H.B.C. and relevant statutory and non-statutory agencies.
- b. Assisting the Reserve’s Ranger Service with practical maintenance and conservation projects.
- c. Setting members’ annual subscription fees at such rates as are from time to time thought appropriate to cover expenses.
- d. Opening bank account(s).
- e. Receiving donations, raising funds and applying for grants and other finance where appropriate in furtherance of the aims of the Group.
- f. If appropriate, affiliating with voluntary sector bodies for training and expertise.
- g. Organising meetings, training courses and events and if necessary taking out insurance.
- h. Working with similar groups and exchanging information and advice.
- i. Taking any action that is lawful and intended to help it to fulfil its aims.
- j. To represent the Group on the Hastings Country Park Management Forum .

4. Membership

- a. The Group shall not be aligned to any party, or faction, politically affiliated or otherwise.
- b. Membership of the Group shall be open to anyone, regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability, who is interested in helping the Group to achieve its aims and is willing to abide by the rules of the Group.
- c. A person shall be considered to be a “member” of the Group upon receipt of their completed membership application form and annual subscription. Every member, whether an individual, company, association or other organisation, shall have one vote at general meetings, both extraordinary and A.G.M. provided that he/she is at least 18 years of age for an individual and for the representative of a

company, association or other organisation.

d. The Management Committee shall have absolute discretion to refuse membership to an applicant where it is considered such membership may be detrimental to the aims, purposes or activities of the Group.

e. The Management Committee may terminate or suspend the membership of any member if in its opinion his/her/its conduct is prejudicial to the interests of the Group, provided that the individual member or representative of the member organisation (as the case may be) shall have the right to be heard by the Management Committee before the final decision is made.

5. Management

a. The Group shall be administered by a Management Committee of not less than five but not more than twelve members elected at the Group's Annual General Meeting. Committee Members must be at least 18 years of age. The Secretary shall invite proposals for election to the committee, and for election as committee officers, and circulate proposals received, prior to the AGM. Proposals for election to the committee, and for election as committee officers, shall also be invited at the AGM.

b. The officers of the Management Committee shall be the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer and such other officers as the Group shall deem necessary at a general meeting, and shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting.

c. The Management Committee shall meet at least twice a year. The appropriate H.B.C. officers will be informed of the date and time at the earliest opportunity.

d. At least six Committee Members must be present for a Management Committee meeting to be quorate, unless the Management Committee consists of only five Members, in which case five Committee Members must be present for a Management Committee meeting to be quorate.

e. Voting shall be by a show of hands. If the vote is tied the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

f. The Management Committee has power to set up sub-groups and work parties as deemed necessary who shall be accountable to the Committee.

6. Finance

a. Any money held by or on behalf of the Group shall be used only in pursuance of the Group's aims and objectives.

b. Any bank accounts opened for the Group shall be in the name of the Group or bear such designation.

c. Any cheque issued shall be signed by at least two nominated signatories, (agreed by the Management Committee) and shall be crossed "Account Payee".

d. No cheque shall be signed unless the payee, amount and date have been completed in full first.

e. The Committee will ensure that the Group stays within budget.

7. Annual General Meeting

a. The Group shall hold an Annual General Meeting (A.G.M.) at no more than 15 months interval.

b. Where possible members shall be notified by post or e-mail, otherwise notice will be deemed served by advertising the meetings in the Visitor Centre and the

Rangers' headquarters in the Park, giving at least fourteen days notice.

c. The business of the A.G.M. shall include:

Receiving a report from the Chairperson of the Group's activities over the year;

Receiving a report from the Treasurer and presentation of the Group's independently examined last financial year's accounts on its finances;

Electing a new Committee and the officers of that Committee, and considering any other matter as may be appropriate at such a meeting.

d. The quorum for the Annual General Meeting shall be at least ten members.

8 Extraordinary General Meeting

If necessary, the Committee may call an Extraordinary General Meeting. The Secretary must notify all members as per clause 7b, giving the reason for the said meeting. The quorum shall be at least ten members.

9. Alteration of the Constitution

a. Proposals for amendments to this constitution or dissolution (see clause 10) must be delivered to the Secretary in writing and signed by at least 10 of the members. The Secretary in conjunction with all other officers shall then decide on the date of a general meeting to discuss such proposals, giving at least 28 days clear notice.

b. Any changes to this constitution must be agreed by at least two thirds of those members present and voting at any general meeting.

10. Dissolution

The group may be wound up at any time if agreed by two thirds of those members present and voting at any general meeting. After all debts have been discharged any assets remaining shall be returned to their providers, if they require it, or shall be passed to another group with similar aims.