



Bacup and Stacksteads Neighbourhood Forum Interim Constitution

Name

The name of the Forum shall be the Bacup and Stacksteads Neighbourhood Forum (the Forum).

Area of Benefit

The area in which the Forum will pursue its objects is the Bacup and Stacksteads neighbourhood Area, which is the area To Be Confirmed with Rossendale Borough Council and detailed in an area plan for which the Forum will produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

The area plan will form part of this constitution as appendix 1.

Objects

The purpose of the Bacup and Stacksteads Neighbourhood Forum is:

- To prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Bacup and Stacksteads area;
- To be responsible for planning, budgeting and monitoring expenditure on the production of the Neighbourhood Plan and associated projects, including identifying possible sources of funding;
- To promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Bacup and Stacksteads area;
- To engage with other community and voluntary groups who share a common aim to improve and promote the Bacup and Stacksteads area and benefit the community;
- To engage with suitable businesses and organisations which are established in, or propose to be established in the Bacup and Stacksteads area;
- Identify methods, in consultation with relevant authorities and organisations, of involving the whole community in the preparation of the Plan.
- Create an open an inclusive forum for gathering, analysing and presenting the views and opinions of the community to ensure the Plan is as comprehensive and inclusive as possible;
- Any other appropriate purpose agreed by the Forum;
- Ensure the forum will not be affiliated to any political party or organisation;

Powers

In furtherance of its objects the Bacup and Stacksteads Neighbourhood Forum may:

- Invite and receive contributions and raise funds where appropriate, to finance the work of the Forum, and to open a bank account to manage such funds;
- Publicise and promote the work of the Forum and organise meetings, training courses, events or seminars etc.;
- Engage Consultants and other relevant Professionals to assist with the creation of a Neighbourhood plan;
- Work with groups of a similar nature and exchange information, advice and knowledge with them, including cooperation with other voluntary bodies, charities, statutory and non-statutory organisations;
- If essential to the aims of the forum, Employ staff and volunteers as are necessary to conduct activities to meet the objects of the Forum*1;
- Take any form of action that is lawful, which is necessary to achieve the objects of the Forum, including taking out any contracts which it may see fit.

*Note –*1: The forum will not permit the employment of any individual who may have a conflict of interest by way of holding employment or significant role with Rossendale Borough Council (RBC), Lancashire County Council (LCC) or other authority, official body or organisation involved in community matters.*

The forum will not permit a member of the management committee to be an employee.

Membership

Qualifying criteria:

1. The Bacup and Stacksteads Neighbourhood Forum will comprise at least 21 individuals who live or work in the Bacup and Stacksteads Neighbourhood Area or who are elected members of a county council or borough council, any of whose area falls within the Bacup Neighbourhood Area.
2. Membership is open to individuals who live or work in the Bacup and Stacksteads Neighbourhood Area. It is also open to individuals who are elected members of a county council or borough council, any of whose area falls within the Bacup and Stacksteads Neighbourhood Area.

The definition of “individuals who work in the area” are those persons with a genuine long-term business interest, long term or permanent employment contract based in the Bacup and Stacksteads area.

3. Membership shall be drawn from different parts of the Bacup and Stacksteads Neighbourhood Area and different sections of the community in the Bacup and Stacksteads Neighbourhood Area.
4. Applications can be made by individuals, corporate bodies or voluntary groups. Corporate bodies or voluntary groups which are accepted into membership must designate an individual empowered to represent them. Applicants under this category must specify the body or group they represent, the nature of its work within the Bacup and Stacksteads Neighbourhood Area and the individual's role with that body or group.
5. Members must be over 16 years of age, can attend Forum meetings and are eligible to vote on proposals put forward by the Forum.

Members shall be accepted by the Forum; resignations from membership shall be received by the Forum.

The initial list of members will be tabled at a founding Open Meeting of the Forum and deemed accepted if a majority of those voting at the meeting approve them.

Subsequent applications for membership will be deemed to be accepted automatically on meeting the qualifying criteria. The management committee may refuse an application if it is considered not to meet the qualifying criteria, from a person or entity liable to disrupt the aims of the forum, a person or entity not fit to offer constructive input to the forum or a person or entity not properly declaring any conflicts of interests.

Any refusals for membership will be disclosed at the next full meeting where the membership present will vote by a simple majority to support or overturn the management committee's decision.

The management committee may terminate a membership if it is found not to meet the qualifying criteria, of a person or entity disrupting the aims of the forum, of a person or entity not fit to offer constructive input to the forum or a person or entity found to have not properly declared any conflicts of interests.

Any membership terminations will be disclosed at the next full meeting where the membership present will vote by a simple majority to support or overturn the management committee's decision.

All members of the Forum have a duty to declare at application stage any financial interests or associations through party political or other organisations, employment or land ownership that could have an impact on their, or the Forums work.

Working Arrangements

The Forum will form a management committee proposed at the founding Open Meeting of the Forum. The management committee will oversee the day to day running of the forum, it will meet at least 6 times a year and will consist of no fewer than 5 members and a maximum of 12.

The Forum will appoint the following offices which will form part of the management committee:

- Interim Chairperson
- Interim Secretary
- Interim Treasurer

The Forum will appoint members to the management committee to represent different topic areas and roles, the details will be declared at full meetings.

The Management Committee may co-opt up to 3 additional members who will retire at each AGM.

The quorum for any committee meeting shall be at least 50% of the Management Committee.

Notification of Board meetings and the agenda will be sent out at least 14 days before the date of the meeting to all Board members.

To maintain an independent representation for the local community, to ensure independence of operations and for transparency, the forum will place the following restrictions on members of the management committee. Persons with the following positions or interests shall not be permitted to be members of the management committee:

- Councillors or Officers of RBC, LCC or other official body with authority within Rossendale.
- Owners, Directors, shareholders, senior officers or decision-making employees of the following types of businesses in Rossendale:
 1. Landlords, commercial landowners, (multiple)property owners and / or property developers;
 2. Housing associations / organisations;
 3. Trades Contractors who engage with RBC, LCC (or 'arms-length' entities controlled by RBC, LCC);

Bacup & Stacksteads neighbourhood forum – interim constitution 7th February 2019

- Other persons / entities who could gain a pecuniary advantage from specifying / directing the nature of plans and or developments.

The Forum recognises that RBC, LCC, landlords and businesses will need to be fully engaged and included within the forum. The forum will actively look to consult with and take guidance, feedback and input from the above entities. The forum will therefore permit and invite representatives of the above entities and organisations to consult with the forum and management committee, attend management committee meetings and act as advisors to the Forum.

For clarity, this does not exclude any qualifying individual being from being a member of the forum.

The forum will limit members of the management committee who hold comparable management / steering / leadership roles with other community / voluntary groups in Rossendale to one member per organisation.

This is to maintain independence of the forum, ensure transparency and to prevent the perception of or the direction of the forum being aligned with other groups or organisations without the consent of all members.

The management committee can accept forum members (and where beneficial, non-members) to meetings for input and discussion, but these persons may not vote on or take part in the decision making process of the management committee.

Permanent Constitution and future alteration of the Constitution

The Management Committee will consult with members to develop a permanent constitution to be presented and voted on by members no later than 6 months of the Forum being established.

After which, the procedure for altering or amending the constitution is to propose a motion at an AGM or EGM whereby the proposed amendment / alteration is to be published at least 14 days in advance of any meeting.

The alteration or amendment is to be voted on by all present members requiring a two thirds majority to pass the motion.

Finances

The Treasure will keep a record of all financial receipts and payments with an annual account being presented at each AGM.

Funds held in any account will require a minimum of 2 signatories to drawdown or issue payments.

An account for the Forum will be held at Bacup Credit Union for the purposes of receiving and holding funds for the Forum.

A full financial policy is to be presented to the members within 6 months.

Duration

The duration of the Bacup and Stacksteads Neighbourhood Forum is 5 years from 7th February 2019

The procedure for dissolving the Bacup and Area Neighbourhood Forum, in the event that it is not longer required:

The forum can be dissolved after due notice (14 days) of either an AGM or EGM where the motion is presented and approved by a quorum of two thirds of the members present. Any funds or property remaining is to be donated to a suitable cause in the Bacup & Stacksteads area as approved by the members present.

Notes – The Act sets out the 5 year life of a forum from the designation date. It could continue in a different guise after this time, but it would cease to be the neighbourhood planning body.