

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

A registered charity (No. 269535) founded in 1973 to aid in the establishment and management of the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve and adjacent areas.

CONSTITUTION

2020 revisions to be approved at AGM

1. The name of the group shall be Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.
2. The objects of the group shall be to further the charitable purposes of the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Management Committee and shall include:-
 - (a) Assisting the management of the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve through voluntary work and contributions.
 - (b) Fund raising by way of subscription and activities and organising local publicity for the Nature Reserve.
 - (c) Recruiting members to support the Nature Reserve.
 - (d) Co-operating with other Local Bodies and Authorities and SWT taking all such other steps as may from time to time be necessary to preserve the interests of the Nature Reserve.
 - (e) To do all such things and to take all such measures as may be considered to be in the interest of the Nature Reserve at the discretion of the group and with the approval of the Management Committee and SWT or such other body as shall from time to time be responsible for the running of the Nature Reserve.
3. The Officers shall be the Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, an Honorary Secretary, an Honorary Treasurer and a Membership Secretary who will be proposed and seconded and elected by ballot if necessary at each Annual General Meeting. The Officers shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting, when they shall retire but shall be eligible for re-election from year to year.
4. The Committee shall consist of the Officers and up to eight elected members. Senior members of the staff for the time being of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, shall be additional members ex-officio, but shall not have a vote and their presence shall not be taken into account when forming a quorum. Four members of the Committee, at least two of whom shall be Officers, shall form a quorum.
5. The members of the Committee shall be proposed and seconded and elected by ballot if necessary at each Annual General Meeting. Each Committee member shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting, then he or she will retire but will be eligible for re-election from year to year.
6. Any casual vacancy on the Committee shall be filled up by the Committee and any member so chosen or co-opted shall retire at the following Annual General Meeting but shall be eligible as a candidate for election on the Committee at such Annual General Meeting. In addition the committee may

co-opt additional committee members (in excess of the maximum stated at para. 4) in circumstances where the workload of the committee or the need for expertise in particular disciplines is necessary to augment that of the existing committee members. Any such additional members shall retire at the next Annual General Meeting but shall be eligible as candidates for election to the committee at such Annual General Meeting.

7. The Committee shall have the control of the finances of the group and all such administrative powers as may be necessary for properly carrying out the objects of the group in accordance with this Constitution. Provided always that no member of the Committee shall be personally liable for any actions carried out in accordance with this clause.
8. **The Secretary shall conduct the correspondence of the group and shall ensure the safe keeping of all documents hard copy and electronic belonging to the group.**
9. The Secretary shall conduct the correspondence of the group and shall have the custody of all documents belonging to the group. He or she shall keep full and correct minutes of all proceedings and records of all activities of the group.
10. The Treasurer shall keep the accounts of the group and shall make up the annual statement of accounts (and balance sheet if necessary) of the group to the 31st day of March in each year, which shall after independent examination (or audit if necessary) be circulated among the members of the group with notice of the Annual General Meeting.
11. Two independent examiners shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting. They or one of them shall examine the accounts and shall certify the same before they are printed. The accounts shall be audited if necessary.
12. The Annual subscription to the group shall be fixed by the Committee from time to time and all subscriptions shall be payable in advance on the first day of May in each year. A full subscription shall be payable upon joining. Subscriptions from new members received after 1st January will be valid until 1st May the following year.
13. On the recommendation of the Committee, Honorary members may be elected at any General Meeting of the group. A two-thirds majority of members present shall be necessary at such election. Honorary members may be elected for life or for such other period as the General Meeting may deem expedient.
14. Individual members under the age of 16 shall pay a reduced subscription to be fixed by the Committee from time to time.
15. The Annual General Meeting of the group shall be held each year, between the 1st September and 31st October, at such time and place as the Committee shall determine.

16. At least 21 days notice of the Annual General Meeting specifying the business to be transacted, the day, place and hour of the meeting, shall be sent to every member by letter to their address last notified to the Membership Secretary, or by email to those members who have chosen to receive their newsletters by this means. **Nominations for the election of officers shall be made in writing or by email at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. Such nominations shall be supported by a seconder and the consent of the proposed nominee must first have been obtained. The election of officers shall be completed prior to the election of further committee members.**
18. **Voting at Annual General, Extraordinary and Committee Meetings shall be by a show of hands unless a poll is demanded by not less than 55% of members present at the meeting.**
19. The title to all Freehold and Leasehold property which may be acquired by or on behalf of the group shall be vested in the official custodian for charities or in not fewer than three or more than four individual members as trustees for the group.
20. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of members voting at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting of the group provided 21 days notice of the proposed amendment has been given to all members **excepting those not wishing to receive communications** and provided nothing therein contained shall authorise any amendment, the effect of which would be to cause the group at any time to cease to be a charity in law.
21. The group may be dissolved by a two-thirds majority of members voting at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting of the group. After the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, the remaining property shall not be paid or distributed among the members of the group but shall be given or transferred to such other charitable organisation or organisations having similar objects.

(This edition of the Constitution incorporates amendments approved at the Annual General Meetings held on 8 May 1993, 17 September 1994, 7 October 2000, 29th September 2007 and 25th September 2010. Additional amendments drafted into paras. 4, 6 and 17 were put to the AGM on 6th October 2012 and duly approved. **Amendments in bold type were agreed at the AGM on 24th September 2016.**