



## Constitution

### 1 Name

The name of the group shall be The Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort, hereafter referred to as 'The Friends'.

### 2 Aims

The aims of The Friends are:

- 2.1 To foster and promote the two sites, namely Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort, by working in partnership with Bedford Borough Council, their officers and other stakeholders.
- 2.2 To protect the local environment for the purpose of enhancing the amenity of the two sites in accordance with the appropriate Management Plans.

### 3 Membership

- 3.1 Membership is open to anyone who supports the aims of The Friends.
- 3.2 Membership shall begin as soon as the completed membership form has been received by the secretary.
- 3.3 There is no membership fee.
- 3.4 A list of all members shall be kept by the secretary. Membership data shall be held in accordance with The Friends' Data Protection Policy. The secretary shall carry out a review of membership every two years. Each member shall be contacted to determine if they wish to remain a member and receive communications from The Friends. The revisions to the membership list shall be agreed with the Chairman and the membership list amended accordingly.
- 3.5 Members may resign at any time in writing to the secretary.
- 3.6 Any offensive behaviour or inflammatory remarks shall not be permitted. Anyone behaving in a manner contrary to the Equal Opportunities Statement 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 a General Meeting, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

#### **4 Equal Opportunities Statement**

The Friends shall not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, political belief, pregnancy or maternity, race including colour, ethnic or national origins and nationality, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

#### **5 Officers**

**5.1** Officers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting. The officers' roles are as follows:

**5.1.1** Chairman, who shall chair all meetings and lead the group.

**5.1.2** Secretary, who shall be responsible for the taking of and distribution of minutes, the distribution of all meeting papers and maintaining membership records.

**5.1.3** Treasurer who shall be responsible for maintaining accounts.

**5.1.4** Task and Events Co-coordinator, who shall organise work tasks and events.

**5.2** All office-holding positions shall be eligible for re-election at the Annual General Meeting. In the event of an officer standing down during the year a replacement shall be elected at the next General Meeting.

#### **6. Annual General Meetings**

**6.1.** An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held within fifteen months of the previous AGM. All members shall be notified in writing at least 2 weeks before the date of the meeting, giving the venue, date and time.

**6.2** Nominations for officer posts may be made to the secretary before the meeting, or at the meeting.

**6.3** The quorum for the AGM shall be six members.

**6.4** At the AGM:-

**6.4.1** The Chairman shall present a report of the work of The Friends over the previous year.

**6.4.2** The Treasurer shall present the accounts of The Friends for the previous year.

**6.4.3** The officers for the next year shall be elected.

**6.4.4** Any proposal given to the secretary at least 7 days in advance of the meeting shall be discussed.

## **7 Special General Meetings**

**7.1** The secretary shall call a Special General Meeting (SGM) at the request of at least eight members giving a written or verbal request to the Chairman or secretary stating the reason for their request. The meeting shall take place within twenty-one days of the request. All members shall be given two weeks' notice of such a meeting, giving the venue, date, time and agenda, and notice may be given by telephone or email.

**7.2** The quorum for the SGM shall be six members.

## **8 General Meetings**

**8.1** General Meetings are open to all members and shall be held at least every three months or more often if necessary. All members shall be given two weeks' notice of such a meeting, giving the venue, date, time and agenda, and notice may be given by telephone or email.

**8.2** The quorum for a General Meeting shall be shall be six members.

**8.3** Meetings shall be limited to two hours with an extra thirty minutes available at the discretion of the officers present if the agenda can be completed within this time. If the agenda cannot be completed items outstanding may be deferred to the next meeting or a Special Meeting called.

**8.4** As and when required, a General Meeting may agree on the formation of a Sub-Group in order to advise the next General Meeting on a particular subject.

## **9 Rules of Procedure for meetings**

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

**9.2** If a consensus cannot be reached a vote shall be taken and a decision shall be made by a simple majority of members present. If the numbers of votes cast on each side are equal, the chairman of the meeting shall have an additional casting vote.

**9.3** At any meeting the Chairman is empowered to suspend the meeting if, in his opinion, the discussions at the meeting are either not in the best interests of The Friends, or against the aims of The Friends. To enable suspension of the meeting the Chairman must have the approval of at least one other officer. Following suspension of the meeting any subsequent meeting shall be convened in accordance with the provisions set out in this document

## **10 Minutes of Meetings**

Minutes shall be taken of all Annual General, Special General and General Meetings and the minutes made available to all members. The minutes of any meeting shall be ratified at the next relevant meeting.

## **11 Finances**

**11.1** An account shall be maintained on behalf of The Friends at a bank agreed by the General Meeting. The account shall be named 'Friends of Putnoe Woods and Mowsbury Hillfort'.

**11.2** Three cheque signatories shall be nominated by a General Meeting, one to be the Treasurer. The signatories must be neither related to one another nor members of the same household. For cheque payments, two signatories shall be required for payments in excess of £50 and one signatory for cheques of a lesser value.

**11.3** For other payments (including BACS payments, cash withdrawals, debit card payments or cash payments), a requisition note shall be submitted and held by the Treasurer. This requisition note shall be signed by two signatories for payments in excess of £50, and one signatory for payments of a lesser value.

**11.4** Records of income and expenditure shall be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given to each meeting.

**11.5** All money raised by or on behalf of The Friends shall be used to further the aims of the group, as specified in paragraph 2 of this Constitution, and in support of such local charitable organisations as may be agreed at a General Meeting.

## **12 Property**

Any tools or other equipment bought by or donated to The Friends are the property of The Friends. The decision to dispose of any item(s) of property shall be by majority vote of members at a General, Annual or Special General meeting. The proceeds (if any) from disposal shall be credited to The Friends' bank account.

## **13 Amendments to the Constitution**

**13.1** Amendments to the Constitution may only be made at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.

**13.2** Any proposal to amend the Constitution must be given to the secretary in writing. The proposal must be circulated with the notice of meeting.

**13.3** Any proposal to amend the Constitution shall require a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.

**14 Dissolution**

**14.1** In the event of The Friends being unable, for a minimum period of six months, to fulfil their Aims, any member of The Friends may initiate the convening of a Special General Meeting for this purpose. The sole business of this SGM shall be the process of dissolving the group. The group shall be dissolved if a minimum of three quarters of those in attendance at the SGM are in favour.

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

**15 Adoption of the Constitution**

This version of the Constitution supersedes all previous versions and was agreed at the Special General Meeting of The Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort on:

Date

Signed

Name and position in group

Signed

Name and position in group