

Haversham Social & Community Centre Constitution – Precis

Introduction

Driven by changes in Charity Law and a desire by the Trustees to update the constitution of the **Haversham Social and Community Centre Charity (Number: 300276)** to ensure it remains relevant and workable, an updated constitution was adopted by member vote at the 2024 AGM.

The constitution was created from the Charity Commission's model document for an Unincorporated Charitable Association (UCA), with only changes being the addition of HSCC specifics (detailed below). As it is 15 pages long, this precis has been created with the key points. The full constitution is available on our Webpage <https://www.havershamtlinford.org/havershamsocialandcommunitycentre>

We have carried over the relevant elements of the current constitution and removed the operational detail which is not pertinent to a constitution (and would potentially constrain us as we evolve), but is still relevant to how we will operate and will be put into the charity's "operating manual".

Key Elements of the Proposed Constitution

Objects

Taken from the existing constitution. We have not changed these:

The charity's objects ('the objects') are for charitable purposes only; specifically for the spiritual, mental, social and physical benefit of the residents of the Parish of Haversham-cum-Little Linford.

The property over which it has rights of use (called the Social Centre) shall be used for these purposes only. The Social Centre can be used by any and all residents of the parish and, at the discretion of the Trustees, other persons subject to payment of any particular admission fee as determined from time to time by the Trustees and other statutory limitations.

The spirit and the purpose of this clause in the constitution cannot be amended.

Members

As an unincorporated charity, the members are those individuals who are eligible to a) stand for election as a Trustee and b) vote on resolutions (including the election of Trustees) at general meetings. We have clarified that Members:

- must be over 18 and resident in Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish. No corporate or group membership.
- must provide evidence they are residents to be able to vote at a general meeting.

Annual and Special General Meetings (AGM/SGM)

- An AGM will be held within 15 months of the previous one (currently in March each year and that intent continues, but we have added flexibility) and must be in person. The AGM is where the Trustees will be elected along with officer updates and any other matters that require membership attention.
- An SGM can be called by 20 residents or one tenth of membership whichever is lesser.
- Members retain the ability to send resolutions to the Secretary for discussion up to 7 days before any AGM or SGM.
- AGM and SGM quorum is seven (7) members (which includes the eligible Trustees in attendance).

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Trustees and Officers

- The Charity will be managed governed by a “Board of Trustees” replacing the current term of “Management Committee” which is more in line with best practice.
- The Board can also establish sub-committees, under Trustee oversight, to run certain aspects of the charity, such as events, and these sub-committee can involve non-Trustees on a permanent basis or just for a period.
- Trustees have a number of obligations and responsibilities defined by Charity Law (and thus not laid out in the constitution) in particular around ensuring activities are performed in the “best interests of the Charity and align with its Objects” plus making sure the charity is on a sound financial footing.
- Elected trustees must be a member of the Charity, will be elected at a General Meeting and will stand down at each AGM although they can be re-elected each year as now.
- Additionally, the Chair of the Parish Council or a nominated representative of the PC will serve as a trustee (ex-officio trustee).
- The Board of Trustees can also co-opt up to four trustees who may be non-residents and are approved by the elected trustees by a majority vote.
- The constitution requires a minimum of three trustees and a maximum of twelve (elected, ex-officio or co-opted).
- The Board will elect the officers of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and if at least 4 trustees Vice Chair. They each have specific duties according to Charity Law. The Board may elect other roles but these are not defined in the constitution.
- We have removed the concept of User Groups from the constitution. They were expected to each provide a Trustee (as were Milton Keynes City Council and Haversham School) but this requirement was unworkable. Individuals leading user groups can stand for election if a member or potentially co-opted by the Board if appropriate.

You do not need to be a Trustee to get involved in the activities of the Charity – we welcome volunteers to help with events and other activities. The Trustees are the group of people responsible for the governance in accordance with Charity Law but to operate the Charity needs additional hands!

Trustee Meetings

- The Board of Trustees is the new name for the Management Committee
- Minimum 4 meetings per year – as now.
- Quorum is the greater of 2 or one third of trustees.
- Electronic meetings are supported.
- Not a public meeting and confidential to the trustees. Only trustees may vote on resolutions.
- The Board may choose to invite non-trustees in a “voice, no vote capacity” and could be on one-off basis or regularly. This could be very relevant if, for example, a non-trustee was leading an event and would be involved for a short period only.