

Green Elmbridge – Constitution

1. Name: Green Elmbridge

2. Purpose: To create, and nurture, a network of community groups that have an interest in improving the environment and/or carbon reduction: in order to share information and learning, and work collaboratively with the Council to amplify impact.

3 Aims: Our aims are to:

- Connect community groups in Elmbridge that focus on environmental improvement.
- Share information about events and common themes.
- Seek recognition from Elmbridge Council that the Group is an effective collaborator in driving Council action and discussion, sharing, planning and jointly working with the community.
- Promote community resilience, e.g., food security, flooding risk, overheating risk.
- Publicise important local issues and follow their progress through local authority pathways (Elmbridge Borough Council and Surrey County Council)
- Help connect the experiences of local people – as they relate to climate change and the environment – to the functions of local government, including sharing information with, and requesting information from, Elmbridge Borough/Surrey County Council/s and Central Government, and seeking ways of bringing about change.

4 Membership:

4.1 Membership of Green Elmbridge ('the Group') is open to all community/voluntary/not-for-profit organisations that are based, or operate, in Elmbridge, who support our aims, and who, as their sole or part purpose are involved in/committed to:

- reducing carbon emissions/waste going to landfill;
- improving the environment and/or biodiversity;
- tackling/responding to the climate emergency; and/or
- acting as a pressure group to highlight and/or seek government, business, institutional and/or individual action in response to the climate emergency

Whilst we recognise that some businesses/'for profit' organisations may support/be sympathetic to, our aims and be actively involved in some/all of the above, membership is not open to them. They may however apply to become a 'Supporter Organisation' and sign-up to a 'Supporter Pledge'.

Whilst some political parties may support our aims and our work, membership is not open to them.

4.2 Membership of Green Elmbridge will be approved by the Steering Group – with applications being considered at its monthly meetings. All applicants will be required to complete simple pro-forma which demonstrates how their activities support the aims of Green Elmbridge.

4.3 Each Member/Supporter Organisation may send two representatives to each AGM and General Meeting of Green Elmbridge. Member Organisations will have a single vote at each meeting. Supporter Organisations will not be entitled to vote.

4.4 All Member and Supporter organisations will be required to sign Green Elmbridge's 'Code of Conduct' and ensure that their representatives are fully conversant with, and committed to this.

Any offensive behaviour, including racist, sexist or inflammatory remarks, will not be tolerated at meetings, and anyone behaving in an offensive way or breaching the Code of Conduct will be asked to leave and the member organisation asked not to send the offender to represent them again. The Steering Group's decision on this matter will be final.

Member/Supporter organisations whose actions/behaviour inside/outside of formal meetings breaches Green Elmbridge's 'Code of Conduct', 'Equalities Statement/Policy' or is in direct contravention of the aims of the Group, may have its membership withdrawn, as decided by the Steering Group. The Organisation will be notified of this decision and will be able to re-apply for membership after a mediated resolution of the matter.

4.5 A list of Member/Supporter organisations and their named contact/s will be maintained by the Secretary.

4.6 Member/Supporter organisations may resign their membership by writing to the Secretary.

4.7 Communication with Member and Supporter Organisations will generally be made via email unless other means are specifically requested.

5 Equal opportunities

Green Elmbridge will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race (including colour, ethnic or national origin), sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious or political belief, pregnancy or maternity, marital status or age.

We expect all Member/Supporter organisations to respect and adhere to similar equal opportunities requirements in their work, and take action where these are not respected.

Green Elmbridge is affiliated to Friends of the Earth (FoE) England, Wales and Northern Ireland as a local 'Climate Emergency Group' and is committed to the FoE local group charter, including that we strive to make a culture of openness, and actively work to ensure everybody feels included and involved in decision-making regardless of identity or background.

6 Steering Group and Officers

6.1 Member Organisations will, at the Annual General Meeting elect a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer ('officers') – and up to eight other organisational representatives to form the Green Elmbridge Steering Group.

The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of Green Elmbridge will automatically be members of the Steering Group.

The Steering Group membership will rotate as far as possible – with, ideally, at least half of all members being replaced each year.

Officers and Steering Group members should – as far as possible – represent different member organisations.

The Steering Group may appoint its members to other officer roles as necessary throughout the year e.g., public relations officer, membership secretary and set up sub-groups/working groups as appropriate.

Additional members may, at its discretion, be co-opted to join the Steering Group in order to fulfil a specific function for an agreed period of time.

6.2 Steering Group function:

- Agree short- and long-term strategies for the Group's activities
- Carry out the business of the Group including, but not limited to: representing the Group at meetings with the Council and other organisations; letter writing; campaign coordination; press releases and social media; fundraising; events planning and organisation; website maintenance etc
- Consider membership requests and admit new members to the Group
- Review Green Elmbridge's outcomes; reflect on and monitor progress and developments within the organisation.

6.3 Officer roles

Chair:

- To chair all meetings including the January AGM
- Receive agenda item requests, agree and circulate the agenda of meetings five (working) days in advance of each

Secretary:

- To take and distribute the minutes of all meetings
- Plan meeting dates and venues, and ensure that members are informed of these
- Receive membership requests and present these to the Steering Group
- Keep records of Member organisations and their contacts

Treasurer:

- Set up, and maintain, a bank account in the name of the Group (as and when appropriate)
- Maintain accounts/financial statements, regularly presenting these to the Steering Group and to each Annual General Meeting.

These officer roles may be temporarily fulfilled by other members of the Steering Group if the need arises.

6.4 In the event of an officer or Steering Group member standing down during the year a replacement will be elected at the next General Meeting and continue in post until the next Annual General Meeting. In the event of the Treasurer standing down during the year an Emergency General Meeting will be called in order to appoint a successor.

6.5 Any officer or Steering Group member not attending a meeting, or fulfilling their role for three-months without apology/explanation will be contacted by the Chair to clarify whether they wish to resign or to have a temporary 'cover appointment' made, or whether alternative meeting requirements can be made.

7 Meetings

7.1 Annual General Meeting:

Green Elmbridge will hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in January each year (or no later than 15-months after the previous one), to which two representatives of all Member/Supporter organisations will be invited to attend.

All Member/Supporter organisations will be notified of the meeting date, time, venue and draft agenda of the AGM, with a request for Officer/Steering Group nominations, at least one-month in advance by email.

The agenda for the meeting will include:

- a report on Green Elmbridge work over the past year;
- a presentation of accounts;
- the election of Officers and Steering Group members;
- report back on Green Elmbridge related activities from Member/Supporter organisations including achievements, 'highs'/'lows' and plans and hopes for the coming year;
- any other agenda items that have been submitted to the Secretary 10-working days in advance of the meeting.

Nominations for Officers and Steering Group members must be sent to the Secretary at least two-weeks in advance of the AGM.

The quorum for the meeting will be 10% of all Member organisations. In the event that a quorum is not attained the meeting will be postponed and rescheduled

All Membership organisations will have one vote at Annual General Meetings and decisions will be made by a simple majority of those present. If the number of votes cast on each side is equal, the Chair will have an additional casting vote. If the number of votes cast on each side is equal, the matter will be decided by 'the toss of a coin'.

7.2 General Meeting:

A General Meeting of Green Elmbridge will be held (at least) three times per year, which two representatives of each Member/Supporter organisation will be invited to attend. Notification of the meeting date, time, venue and draft agenda will be provided at least one-month in advance.

Member/Supporter organisations will be invited to provide brief reports on aspects of their work at the meeting.

The meeting will try to find general agreement on matters that everyone present can agree to, but if a consensus cannot be reached all Member organisations will have one vote and a decision will be made by a simple majority of members present. If the number of votes cast on each side is equal, the matter will be decided by 'the toss of a coin'.

The Steering Group may, at their discretion, call an Emergency General Meeting in addition to the General Meeting cycle.

7.3 Steering Group meetings:

The Steering Group will meet at least every two-months to agree, discuss and carry out the work of the Group as detailed at 6.2.

The time, venue and agenda for Steering Group meetings will be agreed by the members.

Notes and agreed actions from Steering Group meetings will be maintained and circulated to its members by the Secretary.

The Group will try to find general agreement on matters that everyone present can agree to, but if a consensus cannot be reached a vote will be taken and a decision will be made by a simple majority of those present. If the number of votes cast on each side is equal, the matter will be decided by 'the toss of a coin'.

At least three members of the Steering Group must be present for a meeting to take place and decisions made.

7.4 Agendas

All Member/Supporter organisations will be able to submit agenda items for discussion at the AGM and/or General Meeting to the Secretary at least 10-working days in advance of it taking place.

The Chair, in consultation with Steering Group members, will be responsible for deciding the final agenda of each meeting and ensuring the circulation of this at least five working-days in advance of it taking place.

8 Finances

Green Elmbridge will set up a bank account with a bank agreed by the Steering Group.

Two cheque and other payment signatories will be agreed by the Steering Group (one of whom will be the Treasurer). The signatories must not be related or be members of the same household.

Records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given at each General Meeting and AGM

All money raised by, or on behalf of, Green Elmbridge is only to be used to further its Aims, as detailed in clause 2 of this constitution.

9 Amendments to the Constitution

Amendments to the constitution may only be made at an Annual General Meeting or General Meeting to which all Member/Supporter organisations have been invited, and where the amendment proposals have been circulated with the notice of the meeting.

Any proposal to amend the constitution must be given to the Secretary in writing.

Any proposal to amend the constitution:

- at a General Meeting will require 10% of membership organisations to be present, and the support of two thirds of the majority of those entitled to vote; or
- at an AGM will require the support of two thirds of the majority of those entitled to vote.

10 Dissolution

If the Steering Group, by simple majority, decides that it is necessary to close down Green Elmbridge, a special General Meeting may be called to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the group.

If it is agreed to dissolve the group, all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid, will be donated to a local charitable organisation who shares common aims with Green Elmbridge. The organisation will be agreed at the meeting which agrees the dissolution.

This constitution was agreed at the Inaugural General Meeting of Green Elmbridge on:

Date/...../.....

Name and position in group

Signed

Name and position in group

Signed