

The Constitution of The Northern Counties Allotments Association

1. The Name

The Name of the Association (“the Association”) shall be **The Northern Counties Allotments Association**.

2. The Counties

The Northern Counties (“the Counties”) geographically shall be those bordered with Scotland in the North, the North Sea in the East and Cumbrian Coast to the West. In terms of community areas this is Cumbria, Cleveland, County Durham, East Riding of Yorkshire, Northumberland, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Yorkshire, Tees Valley together with the Cities, Boroughs, Towns and Parishes within the area. Parts of other adjacent counties may be included to harmonise with administrative changes.

3. The Objects

The objects (“the objects”) of the Association shall be;

- To promote the interests of the membership with regard to the proper cultivation, good management and enjoyment of allotments in as environmentally friendly way within the framework of the various Allotment Acts;
- To promote a greater understanding of allotment gardening among the local communities of the members by providing education, training and advice;
- To maintain and improve facilities which will protect members and their site against damage, trespass and theft;
- To collect and share information and advice with other organisations and individuals;
- To advise members on allotment issues such as fundraising, governance, good practice, devolvement etc;
- To support and advise local authority allotment officers and town and parish council clerks to carry out their statutory duties in allotment provision;
- To affiliate to any national, international or other regional organisation (“the Affiliated Organisation”) in furtherance of these objects, the choice of the Affiliated Organisation to be agreed at a General meeting;
- To carry out the above objects with the sole purpose of the benefit of the Association and its membership.

In furtherance of the Objects the Association can;

- Hold at least four quarterly Forums (“the Quarterly Forum”) a year, open to all the membership;
- Attend or participate in shows, exhibitions, seminars, festivals etc;
- Organise meetings of a Northern Counties Allotment Officers Forum, as required, for those involved with the administration of allotments as a statutory duty;
- Nominate member(s) to represent (“the Representative”) the Association at meetings of Affiliated Organisations.
- Nominate an Events Coordinator to manage and organise events, shows, exhibitions etc.

4. The Powers

The Association shall have the power to;

Raise funds, apply for grant funding and invite or receive donations and contributions, whether by subscription or otherwise;

Support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for all or any of the objects.

5. Administration

Governance of the Association shall be vested in the General Meetings.

Subject to the matters set out below, the Management of the Association shall be delegated to the Committee of the Association as constituted by clause 7 of this constitution.ⁱ

6. The Membership

Membership (“the Membership”) is extended to any person irrespective of age, gender, disability, sexuality, race, class, religions, employment status, marital status or caring responsibilities, unrelated criminal convictions or political belief who is a tenant or member of any allotment site or is a gardener or someone with an interest in gardening within the Counties.

Membership is also extended to an Entity (“the Entity”) such as an allotment association or society where a single member is appointed to represent the Entity, any appointment must be made at a meeting held according to the ordinary practice of the appointing Entity. All members of the Entity will be classed as Members of the Association, the class of membership of the Entity to be reflected in that of the Association.

The member (“the Member”) shall be a fully paid up member and shall have one vote at meetings of the Association. Other references to members within this Constitution refer to non-voting classes of membership unless that class has voting rights.

Where the Member is a member of an Affiliated Organisation or an Entity they can either be a Member as an individual or by virtue of their membership of the Affiliated Organisation or Entity, not both. The class of membership of the Affiliate shall be reflected in that of the Association.

Membership of the Association shall be at the discretion of the Committee.

7. Management Committee

The affairs of the Association shall be conducted by a Management Committee (“the Committee”) of fully paid up Members elected at the Annual General Meeting.

The Committee shall consist of a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer plus a minimum of three and a maximum of seven committee members, one of whom should be a Minutes Secretary.

Wherever possible a committee member should represent either a geographical area or a business area such as Allotment Officers, land owners or other organisations expressing an interest in the affairs of the Association.

The Events Coordinator shall be an ex officio member of the Committee.

The Representative(s) of the Association shall be ex officio members of the Committee.

No one committee member can hold more than one post on the Committee.

The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer shall hold office for three years on a rotation basis. After three years the Chair shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

Committee members shall be eligible for re-election each year.

The Committee shall have the power to create Sub-Committees for specific tasks and co-opt additional members and non-voting members up to a maximum of six and shall always include at least one elected Committee Member. Any such co-opting will automatically cease at the next AGM but can be renewed by agreement at the first Committee meeting following that AGM.

The Committee shall have the power to co-opt members to fill vacancies which arise between AGMs.

The Committee may from time to time make and alter rules.

Five members of the Committee shall form a quorum. In the event of a meeting being inquorate then the matter will be deferred to the next Committee Meeting, an AGM or EGM or the next Quarterly Forum.

The Chair (in their absence or other Committee member appointed for the purpose of the meeting) shall chair all meetings of the Association.

The work of the Committee shall be voluntary, unpaid and open only to Members of the Association. The Committee may create Associate, Honorary and classes of non-voting membership, and may determine the rights and obligations of any such members (including payment of membership fees), and the conditions for admission to, and termination of membership of any such class of members. The Secretary will keep an accurate register of Members of all Membership Classes, ensuring that at all times the content of the register complies with any requirement of data protection or similar legislation.

The Secretary, or person nominated in their absence, shall record minutes of all meetings of the Association including:

- the names of the Members present at the meeting;
- the decisions made at the meetings; and
- where appropriate the reasons for the decisions;
- decisions made by the Committee otherwise than in meetings,

such minutes to be available for all Members to inspect at reasonable notice.

The Management Committee shall meet at least four times a year.

Any Committee Member shall cease to hold office if they become incapable due to physical or mental illness or is absent from three or more consecutive normal Committee Meetings without good reason.

8. Finance

All income shall only be applied to further the objects of the Association.

The Treasurer shall open and maintain banking account(s) in the name of the Association and shall keep proper records of income and expenditure and report on them or deliver them up as required by the Committee.

Such accounts shall be audited or examined at least once a year by an independent examiner appointed by the Annual General Meeting.

The Treasurer may operate a petty cash account for the discharge of small expenditure, the limit of this account to be set at the first Committee Meeting after an Annual General Meeting.

Expenditure in excess of the petty Cash limit must be agreed beforehand by a majority vote of the Committee, at least three members voting in favour of the expenditure.

Cheques shall be signed by the Treasurer and any one of two Committee members nominated by the Committee as signatories.

The Financial Year shall run from 1st April to 31th March.

All members of the Association shall keep accurate records of their dealings on behalf of the Association and shall be entitled to claim reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred on behalf of the Association. Reasonable expenses will be agreed by the Committee.

9. Association Meetings

The Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of the Association shall be held at the same time as the Quarterly Forum immediately after the financial year end.

At least 21 days advance notification of the date and agenda of any General Meeting shall be circulated to the Members.

Items for the agenda of any General Meeting shall be communicated to the Secretary not less than 7 days in advance to allow preparation for the meeting.

The quorum at any General Meeting shall be twenty Members or 25% of the Membership whichever is the lesser.

In the event of a quorum not being present at a General Meeting then the meeting shall be adjourned to a date and time specified by the Committee not less than fourteen days later in order to circulate the new date and agenda.

In the event of a quorum not being present at the adjourned meeting the Members present shall be deemed a quorum for the meeting.

Where an Affiliate has requested that the Association propose a Motion concerning the business of that Affiliate then Voting shall be restricted to Members of the Affiliate only.

An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called at the request of twenty Members or 25% of the Membership whichever is the lesser. An EGM shall only be called where the business to be discussed is of an urgent or important nature that cannot be left until the next AGM.

Any Member of the Association may appoint another person as a proxy to exercise all or any of that Member's rights to attend, speak and vote at a General Meeting of the Association.

Business to be conducted at an Annual General Meeting;

- Matters arising from and adoption of the previous year's AGM minutes;

- Reports from the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer;

- The presentation and adoption of the Accounts for the previous financial year;

- The election of Chair and/or Secretary and/or Treasurer and Committee Members.

- The appointment of independent examiner

- Such other business as has been communicated to the Secretary and appears on the agenda included in the notice of the Meeting.

Business to be conducted at a Quarterly Forum;

- The membership will meet quarterly to exchange information, views and best practice on allotment issues.

- Receive news and updates from Representatives of any Affiliated Organisations.

- Receive updates from the ADI Mentor.

- Presentations from experts on specific subjects, hold workshops, sub-committee meetings, demonstrations etc. which further the Objects of the Association.

- Quarterly Forums, unless a quorum of Committee members be present, will have no executive power.

- The chair of the Quarterly Forum may request a resolution for the Management Committee to consider at its next meeting, such request not to be unreasonably refused.

10. Amendments to the Constitution

Any proposal to amend this Constitution must be delivered in writing to the Secretary of the Association not less than 21 days before the date of the meeting at which it is first to be considered.

An amendment will require the approval of a two-thirds majority of individual Members of the Association present and voting at a General Meeting. Notice of each such Meeting must have been given in accordance with normal procedure.

11. Dissolution of the Association

If at any AGM or EGM a resolution for the dissolution of the Association is passed by a majority of the Members present, the Committee shall immediately or on a date specified by the resolution, realise the assets of the Association. Any assets remaining, after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, shall be transferred to a similar organisation or charity of the Associations choice.

Amendments History

The following is a history of the amendments made to this document with the date of amendment and version.

Version	Date	Details of change	
1.0	26 April 2014	Constitution adopted at general meeting	
2.0	28 January 2017	Amendments as follows:	
<p>Clause 2 Geographic area amended to include Borough, District, Parish and Town councils etc.</p> <p>Clause 3 Types of Events added. Events Coordinator added.</p> <p>Clause 5 Added to strengthen governance of the association.</p> <p>Clause 7 Events Organiser added as ex officio Committee Member.</p> <p>Clause 9 3rd paragraph reworded with better grammar.</p> <p>Clause 9 New paragraph (7th) added re voting procedures for motions affecting affiliates.</p> <p>Clause 9 8th paragraph Terms for calling an EGM strengthened.</p>			
3.0	14 April 2019	Amendments at AGM as follows:	
<p>Title; Name changed from 'Northern Region' to 'Northern Counties'</p> <p>Clause 6 Extend the Membership to all gardeners in the Counties</p> <p>Clause 7 Officers to be elected for a 3-year period. Chair cannot have a fourth year. Officers re-elected a rotation basis</p> <p>Clause 8 Change Financial year to 1st April - 31st March</p> <p>Clause 9 Change to reflect change in Clause 7</p>			