

CONSTITUTION OF THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE MUSEUMS AND HISTORIC HOUSES FORUM

1. Name

The name of the association is the 'Northamptonshire Museums and Historic Houses Forum', hereinafter known as 'the Forum'.

[*The Museums Association definition of a museum is –*

“Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens that they hold in trust for society.”

Membership of the Forum shall therefore be open to organisations, establishments and individuals that operate to increase the awareness of museum collections and heritage within the county of Northamptonshire such as -

- *Museums, Historic Houses,*
- *Heritage Centres,*
- *Historic sites,*
- *Galleries,*
- *Arts Centres and*
- *individuals representing interested organisations or with an interest in the Forum's work*

hereinafter to be known as 'the Forum Members.']

2. Area of benefit

The work of the Forum shall be conducted within the County of Northamptonshire, as defined by Government.

3. Purpose (Objects)

- 3.1 To promote, support, develop and represent the interests of the Forum Members.
- 3.2 To act as an advocate for the Forum Members.
- 3.3 To encourage liaison and develop support from statutory authorities.
- 3.4 To maintain a network of contacts and to encourage co-operation amongst the Forum Members.
- 3.5 To improve service standards of Forum Members in the county of Northamptonshire.
- 3.6 To promote best standards of care and management of collections.
- 3.7 To encourage the Forum Members to establish acquisition and disposal policies with the aim of retaining collections in the public domain.

- 3.8 To assist in the identification of funding opportunities.
- 3.9 To develop partnerships amongst the Forum Members.
- 3.10 To promote access to collections and associated information for all inhabitants and visitors to the county of Northamptonshire.
- 3.11 To provide training for the Forum Members to improve their standards and services to the public.
- 3.12 To promote tourism and visits to the Forum Members' establishments.
- 3.13 To seek professional advice to achieve the Forum's aims including museum development. Also to work with Local Authorities, Northamptonshire Archives Service, Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership, East Midlands Museum Service (EMMS) and other organisations.

4. Powers

To attain the aforesaid purpose but not further or otherwise the Forum shall have the following powers:

- 4.1 To bring together in conference the Forum members and to provide them with a corporate voice on issues affecting the area.
- 4.2 Where necessary to arrange and provide for the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures, classes, seminars or training courses.
- 4.3 To collect and exchange information on all matters relating to its purpose and to exchange such information with other bodies having similar purposes.
- 4.4 To raise money by means of affiliation fees and subscriptions from participating organisations, establishments and individuals and also by donations, legacies, deeds of covenant, grants in aid from statutory authorities and other sources.
- 4.5 To receive money on deposit or loan in such manner as the Forum may think fit.
- 4.6 To invest money not immediately required for its purposes in or upon such investments, securities or property as the Forum may think fit subject nevertheless to such conditions (if any) as may for the time being be imposed by law.
- 4.7 To commission consultants.
- 4.8 To do all such other lawful things as shall further the purposes of the Forum.
- 4.9 To elect officers and committee members from the Forum at an annual general meeting or an extraordinary general meeting.
- 4.10 To arrange at least two general Forum meetings per year, (January/February and September/October), plus an Annual General Meeting.
- 4.11 To dissolve the organisation according to section 15.

5. Membership

- 5.1 Membership of the Forum shall be open to organisations, establishments and individuals that operate to increase the awareness of museum collections and heritage within the county of Northamptonshire as described in section 1 and are hereinafter to be known as 'the Forum Members'.
- 5.2 Each Forum Member shall pay the annual subscription set by the committee and agreed at the preceding Annual General Meeting. Forum Members not having paid their subscription by the end of August shall be deemed to have lapsed from membership. No Forum Member representative shall be entitled to vote on the business of any Forum meeting until such time as their annual subscription has been paid.
- 5.3 Those seeking membership should apply initially to the Treasurer in writing. Decision on membership of the Forum will be made by the Committee.
- 5.4 Every paid up Forum Member shall appoint one representative to attend Forum meetings. Each paid up Forum Member shall have one vote via their appointed representative. The chair has the casting vote.
- 5.5 The committee may by unanimous vote and for good reason terminate membership of any Forum Member, provided that the appointed representative of the Forum Member concerned shall have the right to be heard by the committee, accompanied by a colleague if required, before a final decision is made.
- 5.6 An up to date list of all Forum Members shall be kept by the Forum Secretary and Treasurer.

6. Committee

- 6.1 At the Annual General Meeting the Forum Member representatives shall elect from amongst themselves a Chair, a Vice Chair, a Treasurer, a Secretary and up to 8 committee members, who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting and who shall constitute a committee responsible for the management of the Forum.
- 6.2 Officers and committee members shall be appointed to serve until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting.
- 6.3 The Committee has the power to co-opt persons having special knowledge or experience as advisers, without powers to vote, onto the committee.
- 6.4 The Committee has the power to co-opt extra Forum member representative/s on to the committee. These members will have powers to vote.
- 6.5 No Forum Member representative under the age of 16 shall be a member of the committee or any sub-committee of the Forum.
- 6.6 Any member of the committee who does not attend for three consecutive committee meetings, without just reason and accepted apology, will be automatically stood down and will be ineligible for re-election when that position is subsequently filled.

7. Proceedings of meetings

- 7.1 The Chair shall act as Chair at all meetings of the general meetings of the Forum and the committee. If the Chair is absent from any meeting, the Vice Chair will chair the meeting. If the Vice Chair is absent, the members of the committee, or Forum Member representatives present at general meetings, shall choose one of their number to be Chair of the meeting before any business is transacted.
- 7.2 There shall be a quorum at general meetings when at least 1/3 of paid-up members are present at a meeting.
- 7.3 There shall be a quorum at committee meetings when at least 1/3 of members are present at a meeting.
- 7.4 Every matter shall be determined by a majority of votes but in the case of equality of votes, the chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
- 7.5 The Secretary, or other delegated person, shall keep minutes of the proceedings at all meetings of the Forum and committee.

8. Sub-committees

Sub-committees may be established by the committee for a particular activity or service. In each such case:-

- a. The committee shall define the terms of reference of the sub-committee and may also determine its composition and the duration of its activities.
- b. The majority of the members of the sub-committee shall be members of the committee.
- c. All acts and proceedings of the sub-committee shall be reported back to the committee as soon as possible.

9. Financial Arrangements

- 9.1 All monies raised by or on behalf of the Forum shall be applied to further the 'purpose (objects)' of the Forum (see section 3 above) and for no other purpose provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the payment in good faith of reasonable and proper remuneration to any employee of the Forum nor repayment of reasonable and proper out-of-pocket expenses.
- 9.2 An account shall be opened in the name of the Forum with such financial institution, as the committee, it may have established, shall from time to time decide.
- 9.3 The Forum shall authorise in writing, and record in the minutes of an Annual General Meeting, the Treasurer, the Chair and up to two other officers or committee members to sign cheques on behalf of the Forum. All cheques must be signed by not less than two of the authorised signatories.

- 9.4 The financial year will run from 1st April to 31st March.
- 9.5 The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the finances of the Forum.
- 9.6 The Treasurer shall produce an annual financial statement for inspection which will be presented to the Annual General Meeting.
- 9.7 The committee shall have the power to adopt and issue standing orders consistent with this constitution for the conduct of Forum business as approved by an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting.

10. Annual General Meeting

- 10.1 There shall be one Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Forum each year, to be held in April/May.
- 10.2 Every AGM shall be called by the committee. The committee shall give 14 days notice of the AGM to all the affiliated paid-up Forum Members. Whilst all Forum Members are welcome to attend meetings, voting rights will only extend to one paid up Forum Member representative. The Chair has the casting vote.
- 10.3 The Chair of the Forum shall be Chair of the AGM.
- 10.4 The business of the AGM shall include:-
- 10.5 The appointment of the officers and committee of the Forum - as described in section 6. above, and shall elect a non forum member to inspect the annual financial statement.
- 10.6 Presentation by the officers of the Forum of the annual report and financial statements.
- 10.7 Approval of proposals for activities and events for the forthcoming year.
- 10.8 Agreement of subscription for the next financial year commencing the following April.
- 10.9 Any other business appropriate to be transacted at the AGM for which 14 days' notice must be given to the secretary.

11. Special or Extraordinary Meetings

- 11.1 The committee may call a special or extraordinary general meeting of the Forum at any time. If at least four Forum Members request such a meeting in writing stating the business to be conducted the Secretary shall call such a meeting. At least 14 days notice must be given. The notice must state the business to be discussed.

12. Procedure at General Meetings

- 12.1 The Secretary, or other appointed person, shall keep a full record of proceedings and resolutions at every general meeting of the Forum.

- 12.2 There shall be a quorum when at least 1/3 of paid up Forum Member representatives are present at any general meeting.
- 12.3 Every matter shall be determined by a majority of votes of the Forum Member representatives present and voting, but in the case of an equality of votes the chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
- 12.4 At all general meetings each paid up Forum Member shall have one vote via their appointed representative.
- 12.5 If the Chair is not present within 15 minutes of starting the meeting the Vice Chair or other elected person shall run the meeting.

13. Notices

Any notice to be served on any Forum Member shall be in writing, and shall be served by the committee on any Forum Member or their representative in writing, or other electronic means – e.g. email, any posted letter so sent shall be deemed to have been received within 10 days of posting.

14. Alteration/amendments of Constitution

The constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than 2/3 of paid up Forum Member representatives present and voting at a general meeting. The notice of the general meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.

15. Dissolution

- 15.1 If the committee decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Forum, it shall call a meeting of all Forum members, for which not less than 21 days' notice (stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed) shall be given.
- 15.2 If the proposal is confirmed by a 2/3 majority of the paid-up Forum Member representatives present and voting, the committee shall have the power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the Forum.
- 15.3 Any outstanding grant Funding or monies ring-fenced for specific activities will be returned to the funder/s concerned.
- 15.4 Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be divided equally between those in the Forum membership at the date of the meeting dissolving the Forum.

16. Review

This constitution will be reviewed each year prior, and for presentation, to the Annual General Meeting

Signed April 2014 Review date March 2015