

Aveley & Kenningtons Community Forum

Constitution

1) Title

The name of the group shall be known as Aveley & Kenningtons Community Forum.

2) Objectives

Aveley & Kenningtons Community Forum is established to:

- a) Represent all Residents, Community Groups, Statutory Departments and Local Businesses with an interest in the Aveley and Kenningtons area (as defined by the Committee).
- b) Provide a platform for Community debate, action and outcomes, and to share information that will seek to educate and improve social wellbeing, knowledge and awareness of the amenities and services available in our Community.
- c) Strengthen local Community networks and develop constructive and effective partnerships between Local People, Local Businesses, Thurrock Borough Council, Local Policing Officer/s, Health and Education service providers, Statutory Departments, Community Groups, and other relevant organisations who have an interest our Community/defined area. Promote Community cohesion.
- d) Provide a conduit for those detailed above to raise concerns and issues on local matters and communicate those with Thurrock Borough Council and other relevant bodies/organisations.
- e) Achieve funding for local initiatives from Thurrock Borough Council and other relevant bodies/organisations as appropriate. Organise Community events and fund raising events to help to promote Community engagement.
- f) Aveley and Kenningtons Community Forum will be non-political, non-religious and non-sectarian and promote equal opportunities.

3) Membership

Associate Membership: Is open to any Individual, Voluntary Organisation, Community Group or Local Business who lives and/or is based in the Aveley and Kenningtons area as defined by the Committee. Associate Membership entitles Members to attend all public meetings and only requires proof, if requested, of residing or being based in the aforementioned area. Associate Members are not entitled to vote but can take part in public debates.

Full Membership: Is open to any Individual, Voluntary Organisation, Community Group or Local Business who lives and/or is based in the Aveley and Kenningtons area as defined by the Committee. Full Membership requires the Individual/Group/Business to complete a Forum Membership Form this gives them the right to vote. Individuals, Community Groups,

Voluntary Organisations and Businesses are entitled to only 1 vote providing they have attended at least 2 public Forum meetings in the past 6 months.

Honorary Members: May be appointed at the discretion of the General Committee and may include such bodies as Police Authorities, Primary Care Trusts and local ward Councillors. Honorary members shall not be entitled to vote.

All present at Public and Committee meetings should conduct themselves at all times in an acceptable manner as detailed below in The Code of Conduct. Failure to meet The Code of Conduct may result in exclusion from future Forum meetings and events by agreement of the Forum Committee.

Voting Members who have any vested interest in a particular matter including financial, whether direct or indirect, should declare this at the start of any relevant meeting. The member will be required to abstain from voting on that particular matter.

4) Code of Conduct

Members & Visitors are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner at all times. Behaviour that may cause alarm, distress or any form of discrimination towards another person is not acceptable. We are a non-party political organisation and embrace inclusion and diversity. Racist, Sexist, Ageist, Homophobic and discriminatory language aimed at Disabled People, and/or acts of aggression will not be tolerated.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, each person may speak only once on an issue until every other member has had the opportunity to speak, thereby accounting for all opinions.

In the event of there being a conflict of interest (or potential conflict of interest) this must be disclosed to the meeting and if necessary, the member who has disclosed the conflict, (or potential conflict), whether financial or non-financial, shall absent themselves from the meeting whilst the subject is under discussion. Political references shall be avoided.

If any Member or Visitor does not adhere to The Code of Conduct they will be asked to leave the meeting.

5) Forum Officers & The General Committee

A Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee Members shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Aveley & Kenningtons Community Forum. They shall hold office to the conclusion of the following AGM, but shall be eligible for re-election.

Elected Councillors are ex officio members and will not have a vote nor will they be eligible to stand for any Committee member position.

Only Full Members shall be eligible to serve as an Officer or Committee Member. Only 1 Direct Family Member may serve as an Officer. Direct family Members are defined as: Husband, Wife, Common Partnership, Mother, Father, Brother, Sister, Grandmother, Grandfather, Aunt or Uncle.

The affairs of Aveley & Kenningtons Community Forum shall be directed by a General Committee which shall comprise of 3 Officers (Chair, Secretary & Treasurer) plus elected Committee Members (Maximum of 9).

The Members of that Committee shall be elected at the AGM of Aveley & Kenningtons Community Forum and shall hold office for a period of one year. Officers and Committee Members shall be eligible for re-election accepting that they shall hold office for no more than five years. On the expiry of such period one full year should elapse before any Officer or Committee Member can again be eligible for re-election. The exception to the re-election clause will be if there are no other candidates for election.

Honorary and Associate Members shall be invited by the Committee to attend meetings but shall maintain a "non- voting" status.

If any Officer or Committee Member fails to attend more than three (3) consecutive Committee and/or Public meetings without recorded apologies, they will be deemed to have resigned by default.

Aveley and Kenningtons Community Forum Committee may wish to Co-Opt a forum Member onto the Committee if there is an available position. This will be advised at a public meeting by a Committee Member sponsoring and a Committee Member seconding and asking the full Members present to support or object. The majority vote will suffice.

6) Meetings of Aveley & Kenningtons Community Forum

An Annual General Meeting shall be held at a time and a place determined by the General Committee giving the public at least fourteen (14) days notice of such. No more than fifteen (15) months shall elapse since the preceding AGM.

Expressions of interest for the positions of Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee Members must be provided in writing at the AGM before voting takes place.

All Officers/Committee Members will then be selected to form the General Committee by means of election by full members who meet the criteria to vote.

In the event of more than one (1) nomination for a post, an election by a simple majority vote will determine the post holder.

Special General Meetings may be called by any Officer/Committee Member to discuss an urgent matter if agreed by at least two (2) other Officers/Committee Members. This must be given in writing to the Secretary who shall notify all Officers/Committee Members of the Special General Meeting and of the matter to be discussed.

The General Committee will meet not less than twice (2) per year, the actual frequency and timing to be determined by the Committee, these meetings are not open to the general public.

The General Committee will convene at least four (4) public meetings per year, giving the public at least fourteen (14) days notice. One of these meetings is to include the AGM.

Quorum – For a valid public meeting to take place, there must be at least 50% of the elected Officers/Committee Members present. In the absence of the elected Chair a meeting Chair will be elected from the Officers by the General Committee present by way of a simple majority vote.

Voting- At Public Meetings, matters shall be decided by simple majority voting of the Forum's Officers, Committee Members and Full Members. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

Any voting from those eligible to vote will only be accepted by those who have attended at least two (2) public meetings in the previous six (6) months.

Voting at Committee Meetings, matters shall be decided by simple majority voting by Officers and Committee Members. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

Minutes – Minutes of all meetings shall be maintained by the Secretary and approved by the General Committee. These minutes will also be made available at the following Public Meeting and electronically

7) Finance

A bank account in the name of Aveley & Kenningtons Community Forum shall be opened with a bank approved by the General Committee. Not less than two (2) authorised signatories must sign all cheques, they shall not be related in any way either by birth, marriage or common partnership or reside at the same address.

The Treasurer shall maintain accounting records and produce an annual summary for the AGM.

A current financial report will be made available at each meeting. Subject to the request of two (2) or more Committee Members, the accounts must be made available at ten (10) days notice

8) Amendments to Constitution

Once adopted the Constitution may only be amended at the Annual General Meeting or Special General Public Meeting, at which a majority of two thirds of those present, and eligible to vote, is required for ratification.

9) Dissolution

If the General Committee decide by a majority vote that the Aveley and Kenningtons Community Forum is to dissolve, a Special General Public Meeting shall be called to ratify that decision. A majority of two thirds of those present and eligible to vote will be required to endorse the Committee decision. Any excess funds held at that time and available for distribution shall be donated to an agreed charity.

10) Vote of No Confidence

A Vote of No Confidence can be submitted If an Officer or Committee Member is no longer deemed fit to hold their position i.e. not conducting themselves in the best interest of the Aveley and Kenningtons Community Forum, and/or failing to carry out obligations, and/or failing to communicate with other Officers and/or Committee Members, or making decisions that other Officers/Committee Members feel are detrimental to the Objectives of the Aveley and Kenningtons Community Forum.

A Vote of No Confidence must be supported by no less than fifty percent (50) of the General Committee.

Submitting a Vote of No Confidence should be submitted in writing to The Chair of the Thurrock Association of Forums (TAF) advising in writing the reasons for the Vote of No Confidence.

The Chair of TAF will contact Officers and Committee Members to call a Special General Meeting to discuss and vote.
