
BIRSTALL
NEIGHBOURHOOD
FORUM

BIRSTALL NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

CONSTITUTION

(Adopted on: Tuesday, 27 January 2026)

SECTION 1 – NAME

1.1 The name of the organisation shall be **Birstall Neighbourhood Forum** ("the Forum").

1.2 The Forum is an association established under the Localism Act 2011 for the purposes set out in this Constitution.

SECTION 2 – DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Constitution:

- **"LPA"** means the Local Planning Authority, which is Kirklees Council.
- **"Neighbourhood Area"** means the Birstall area as defined in Annex A.
- **"Neighbourhood Plan"** means the statutory development plan prepared by the Forum.
- **"Member"** means any person meeting eligibility rules and listed on the register.
- **"Management Committee (MC)"** means the governing body elected to manage Forum business.
- **"Officer"** means Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, or Administrative Clerk(s).
- **"Voting Member"** means a registered Member with voting rights.
- **"Meeting"** includes AGMs, EGMs, public meetings and MC meetings.

SECTION 3 – AREA OF OPERATION

3.1 The Forum covers the **Birstall Neighbourhood Area**, contained within the administrative boundary of Kirklees Council.

3.2 The boundary is defined by a map in Annex A and described in Annex A-1.

3.3 Should LPA boundary changes occur, the Forum's area will remain fixed unless amended through statutory re-designation.

SECTION 4 – PURPOSE

4.1 The Forum exists solely for the purpose of neighbourhood planning, including:

a. preparing, modifying and reviewing a Neighbourhood Plan;
b. promoting community engagement with planning matters;
c. shaping local development consistent with community needs;
d. facilitating consultation and evidence gathering;
e. supporting long-term environmental, economic and social wellbeing;
f. ensuring community-led decision-making in accordance with law.

4.2 The Forum must operate in compliance with all relevant legislation, including the Localism Act 2011, the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, and the Town and Country Planning Acts.

4.3 The Forum is a non-financial, non-profit, non-party-political body.

SECTION 5 – PRINCIPLES

The Forum shall work to the following principles:

- **Openness** – public access to meetings and records.
- **Inclusivity** – no barriers to participation.
- **Accountability** – decisions made by elected representatives.
- **Transparency** – clear, published procedures.
- **Integrity** – conflicts of interest declared and managed.

- **Democratic decision-making** – with broad community involvement.

SECTION 6 – MEMBERSHIP

6.1 Membership eligibility is open to individuals aged 16+ who:

a. **live** within the Area;
b. Owns and/or runs a business within the Area; or
c. serve as **elected members** for ward covering the Area, this includes councillors and Members of Parliament.

6.2 Membership is free of charge.

6.3 The Forum shall maintain **a minimum of 21 eligible Voting Members** at all times, distributed across different places and sections of the community.

6.4 Members must provide:

- name
- contact details
- confirmation of eligibility category as listed in 6.1.

6.5 Members agree to:

a. support the purpose of the Forum;
b. comply with the Constitution;
c. adhere to the Code of Conduct;
d. treat others with respect during all Forum activities.

6.6 Membership may be terminated by:

a. resignation;
b. breach of Code of Conduct (following due process);
c. fraudulent membership information;
d. acting to deliberately undermine the Forum, its principles and purpose.

6.7 The membership register shall be maintained securely by the Clerk.

SECTION 7 – MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

7.1 The MC shall consist of **between 4 and 10 Voting Members**, including the Officers.

7.2 Responsibilities of the MC include:

a. strategic direction;
b. compliance with law and procedural standards;
c. oversight of all consultation exercises;
d. approving policy drafts;
e. risk management;
f. ensuring transparency and record keeping;
g. reporting to Members at AGMs.

7.3 MC members hold office for **one-year terms** and may stand for re-election without limit.

7.4 The MC shall meet **no minimum then 4 times per year**.

7.5 Quorum is 50% of MC members (rounded up).

7.6 The MC may form sub-groups but retains decision-making authority.

7.7 MC may remove a committee member for:

- persistent non-attendance
- breach of conduct
- behaviour harmful to the Forum

Only following a fair hearing.

SECTION 8 – OFFICERS

8.1 Officers are elected annually at the AGM.

8.2 Officers shall be:

- **Chair**
- **Vice-Chair**

- **Secretary**
- **Administrative Clerk(s)**

8.3 The Forum shall **not appoint a Treasurer** because it does not receive, manage or handle money.

SECTION 9 – OFFICER DUTIES

Chair

- chairs meetings
- provides leadership
- ensures lawful process
- acts as principal spokesperson

Vice-Chair

- deputises for Chair
- undertakes delegated duties

Secretary

- oversees documentation
- ensures statutory compliance
- manages official notices
- maintains constitutional records

Administrative Clerk(s)

- take minutes
- maintain the membership register
- issue agendas and notices
- manage communications
- coordinate consultation tasks
- maintain non-financial administrative systems

Clerks **must not** handle finances or hold any financial responsibilities.

SECTION 10 – ELECTION PROCEDURES

10.1 Elections occur at each AGM.

10.2 Nominations must be received in writing before the vote, no later than 3 days prior to the AGM.

10.3 Voting is by:

- show of hands, or
- secret ballot if requested by 25% of Voting Members.

10.4 Officers and MC members are elected by simple majority.

10.5 In the event of a tie, the incumbent Chair will have the casting vote.

SECTION 11 – WORKING GROUPS

11.1 The MC may create Working Groups to support the Neighbourhood Plan.

11.2 Each Working Group must:

- have a named convenor
- report to the MC
- act within delegated authority
- keep minutes of meetings

11.3 Working Groups **cannot**:

- make binding decisions
- commit the Forum to any action
- handle money
- represent the Forum without MC approval

SECTION 12 – MEETINGS

General Meetings

12.1 General Meetings are open to all Members.

12.2 It to the discretion of the MC to call meetings when appropriate to keep members informed. It is expected the Forum shall meet no less than 4 times a year.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

12.3 AGM shall take place every calendar year.

12.4 Business includes:

- annual report

- MC elections
- Officer elections
- amendments to Constitution
- strategic planning updates

12.5 Notice: minimum **21 days**.

Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM)

12.6 May be called by:

- the MC, or
- 10% of Voting Members.

12.7 Notice: minimum **14 days** unless urgency is justified.

Quorum

12.8 Quorum for General Meetings is:

- **10% of members** OR
- **25 members**,
  whichever is smaller.

Voting

12.9 Simple majority unless otherwise stated.

12.10 The Chair has a casting vote.

SECTION 13 – RECORD-KEEPING

13.1 The Forum must maintain:

- minutes of all meetings
- attendance records
- the membership register
- the conflicts of interest register
- consultation documentation
- responses received during statutory consultation
- copies of all submitted drafts
- election records

13.2 Records must be held for **six years** after dissolution.

SECTION 14 – FINANCIAL POSITION

14.1 The Forum does **not**:

- hold funds
- open bank accounts
- receive payments
- make payments
- apply for grants
- enter into financial commitments

14.2 Should Members wish to change this in future, the Forum must:

a. amend the Constitution;
b. establish full financial procedures;
c. appoint a Treasurer;
d. adopt audit controls;
e. seek approval at an AGM or EGM.

Until these steps are completed, **the Forum remains strictly non-financial**.

SECTION 15 – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

15.1 All MC members, Officers, Working Group convenors and members must declare personal, business or organisational interests.

15.2 Declarations must occur:

- upon election,
- at the start of each meeting,
- when relevant matters arise.

15.3 Members with a declared conflict:

- must not vote
- may be asked to withdraw during discussions

15.4 The Clerk maintains a Register of Interests.

SECTION 16 – CODE OF CONDUCT

16.1 The Forum shall adopt and publish a Code of Conduct consistent with:

- Nolan Principles of Public Life
- respectful behaviour standards

16.2 Breaches may result in:

- warnings
- suspension
- removal from membership

after a fair and transparent process.

SECTION 17 – CONSULTATION STANDARDS

17.1 All consultations must:

- be open to all residents and stakeholders within the Neighbourhood Plan area outlines in Annex A - Neighbourhood Area Map
- be properly advertised
- be inclusive and accessible
- follow recognised best practice
- produce clear audit trails

17.2 Statutory Regulation 14 consultation must include:

- 6-week minimum duration
- full publication of draft plan

- collection and recording of representations
- summary of responses and amendments
- compliance with data protection law

17.3 The MC is accountable for ensuring compliance.

SECTION 18 – DATA PROTECTION

18.1 Forum must comply with UK GDPR.

18.2 The Administrative Clerk is responsible for ensuring data protection.

18.3 Personal data shall:

- be collected lawfully
- be used only for Forum activities
- be stored securely
- not be shared without consent

18.4 Members may request access to their data at any time.

SECTION 19 – TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC ACCESS

19.1 The Forum will publish:

- agendas
- minutes
- boundary map
- consultation documents

- draft and final versions of the Neighbourhood Plan
- annual reports
- membership criteria
- constitution

19.2 Documents must be accessible to the public.

SECTION 20 – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

20.1 Amendments require:

- 21 days' notice prior to AGM or EGM
- two-thirds majority vote of Voting Members present

20.2 Amendments cannot:

- change the Area without new designation
- change the Forum’s lawful purpose
- transfer power away from Members
- allow financial activity without explicit new safeguards

SECTION 21 – DISSOLUTION

21.1 The Forum may dissolve if:

- two-thirds of Voting Members approve at an EGM, or
- the Forum is no longer designated by the LPA.

21.2 Notice of dissolution must be given to the LPA.

21.3 Because the Forum holds no assets, there are **no funds to distribute**.

21.4 All records must be transferred to Kirklees Council within 28 days of dissolution.

ANNEX A – Neighbourhood Area Map

(A map will be attached.)

ANNEX A-1 – Written Boundary Description

ANNEX B – Membership Register (21+ Members Required)

ANNEX C – Code of Conduct

ANNEX D – Conflicts of Interest Form

ANNEX E – Consultation Procedures