



Houghton Regis Helpers Constitution

1. Name

The name of the Group shall be Houghton Regis Helpers

2. Administration

Subject to the matters set out below the Group shall be administered and managed in accordance with this Constitution by members of the Committee, constituted by clause 7 of this Constitution ('the Committee').

3. Aims

The aims of the group ('the aims') are:

To provide to the residents of Houghton Regis and Chalton, short term help such as transport, domestic support and household assistance, through local volunteers – and to encourage sustainability, self help and friendship within the local community.

4. Powers

In furtherance of the aims the Committee may exercise the following powers:

- a) power to raise funds and to invite and receive grants, donations and other contributions;
- b) power to buy or lease and to maintain any equipment or materials necessary for the achievement of the aims;
- c) power to sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the property of the Group;
- d) power to publish books, periodicals, pamphlets and other materials in printed, recorded or electronic format, and to hold intellectual property rights in any such material;
- e) power to organise conferences, debates, seminars, and such other special events as the Committee may determine;
- f) power to co-operate with other organisations in furtherance of any of the aims or of any similar purposes;
- g) power to do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the aims.

5. Membership

- a) Each Group volunteer is defined as being a Group member.
- b) The Group and Committee welcome applications for membership from any local resident irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- c) Group members over the age of 18 years undertaking regulated activities when working with adults will be Enhanced DBS-checked. Where current legislation applies, and

when appropriate, group members over the age of 18 years may require a DBS check to work with children.

Group members below 18 years are deemed by the DBS to be potentially at risk themselves and will always be accompanied by an appropriately DBS-checked (adults and children) Group member.

- d) The Committee have the right to agree or reject applications for Group membership
- e) The Committee may by majority vote and for good reason (such as client or volunteer safety) terminate the membership of any Group member provided that the Group member concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.
- f) The Committee secretary shall be responsible for ensuring membership records are kept in line with Group policies and procedures and that new Group members receive and return any paperwork necessary for membership.

6. Honorary Officers

At the Annual General Meeting the members shall elect from among themselves the following Honorary Officers, who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting:

- ❖ the Chair
- ❖ the Vice-Chair
- ❖ the Secretary
- ❖ the Treasurer

The Honorary officers shall be in post for 2 years on a rotation basis. The Chair and Treasurer shall serve together, and the Vice-Chair and Secretary shall also serve together, until the end of the Annual General Meeting two years after their election but shall be eligible for re-election if they wish to continue in post.

7. Committee

The Committee shall consist of:

- a) The Honorary Officers specified in the preceding clause;
- b) Any other members of the Group elected at the Annual General Meeting.
- c) Any Group members co-opted to the Committee

There must be less than one third of the Committee who are co-opted.

All the members of the Committee shall retire from office together at the end of the next annual general meeting after the date on which they came into office but they may be re-elected or re-appointed.

A member of the Committee shall cease to hold office if s/he:

- a) has been convicted of any offence involving dishonesty or deception;
- b) has been adjudged bankrupt or sequestration of her/his estate has been awarded and s/he has not been discharged;
- c) has made a composition or arrangement with, or granted a trust deed for, her/his creditors and has not been discharged;
- d) has been removed by the Charity Commissioners or by any court or under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 or the Insolvency Act 1986 from

- being concerned with the management or control of any body;
- e) has become incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing his or her own affairs;
 - f) is absent without the permission of the Committee from all its meetings held within a period of six months and the Committee resolves that s/he shall cease to hold office; or
 - g) notifies the Committee of her/his resignation: Provided that at least three members of the Committee will remain in office when the notice of resignation is to take effect.

8. Meetings and proceedings of the Committee

- a) The Committee shall hold at least four meetings each year. A special meeting may be called by the Chair or by any two members of the Committee upon 21 days' notice being given to the members of the Committee of the matters to be discussed.
- b) There shall be a quorum when three persons, including at least one Honorary Officer, or one third of the Committee (whichever is the greater) are present at the meeting.
- c) When a vote is taken the matter shall be decided by a majority of those present and voting. In the case of equality of votes the Chair shall have a casting vote.
- d) The Secretary shall keep minutes of the proceedings of the Committee.
- e) In the absence of the Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary the first business of the meeting shall be to ensure that a substitute is appointed for the duration of the meeting.

9. Sub-committees

The Committee may appoint such sub-committees as it thinks fit for supervising or performing any activity or service, defining the terms of reference and determining each sub-committee's composition and the duration of its activities. All acts and proceedings of each sub-committee shall be reported as soon as possible to the Committee.

10. Receipts and expenditure

- a) A bank account shall be opened in the name of the Group. The funds of the Group including all donations, contributions and bequests, shall be paid into the bank account at such bank or other financial institution as the Committee shall decide.
- b) All cheques, and any other instruction to a financial institution for withdrawal of funds, shall be signed by at least two signatories, where possible one of whom will be the Treasurer. The Committee shall authorise (in writing to the Secretary) the Treasurer and up to three other members of the Committee to sign cheques on behalf of the Group. Signatories shall be appointed by the Committee annually at the Committee's first meeting following the Annual General Meeting.
- c) Where funds are received by donation, grant, gift, bequest or otherwise for specifically designed purposes, such funds shall be held as restricted funds and shall be used only for the purposes defined by the donor(s). They shall be reported in the accounts as restricted funds. If such moneys cannot be spent in accordance with the conditions of their donation, any unspent balance shall be returned to the donors or to their trustees or otherwise used only as the donors or trustees permit. In the absence of such requirement or permission, after reasonable notice to the donors(s) or trustee(s), the Committee shall apply such funds to purposes as near as possible to those for which they were granted.

- d) The funds of the Group shall be applied to further the aims and no payments shall be made to any members of the Committee except reasonable and proper out of pocket expenses.

11. Accounts

- a) The Treasurer shall present to each meeting of the Committee an up-to-date statement of the accounts.
- b) The Treasurer shall prepare annual statements of accounts which, after examination by an independent person appointed by the members at the Annual General Meeting the preceding year, shall be presented to the Annual General Meeting.

12. Indemnity

No member of the Committee shall be liable by reason of any mistake or omission made in good faith by any member of the Committee other than wilful and individual fraud, wrongdoing or wrongful omission on the part of the member whom it is sought to make liable.

13. General meetings

- a) There shall be an Annual General Meeting of the Group which shall be held in the month of February each year or as soon as is practicable thereafter. Every Annual General Meeting shall be called by the Committee. The Secretary shall give at least 21 days' notice of the Annual General Meeting to all the members of the Group, who shall be entitled to attend and vote at the meeting.
- b) Nominations for Honorary Officers and member representatives shall be notified, in writing to the Secretary, at least 7 days prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- c) The business of each Annual General Meeting shall be:
 - I. to receive the Annual Report of the Committee;
 - II. to receive and examine the audited/independently examined/scrutinised accounts of the Group for the preceding financial year;
 - III. to elect the Honorary Officers specified in Clause 6 of this Constitution*;
 - IV. to elect the members of the Committee specified in 7(b);
 - V. to appoint qualified auditor, independent examiner or scrutineer for the coming year;
 - VI. to consider and vote on any proposals to alter this Constitution in accordance with clause 15 of this Constitution;
 - VII. to consider any other business of which due notice has been given.

* Election of Honorary Officers shall be by show of hands if there is one nominee or by secret ballot if there is more than one nominee. In the event of a tied vote, a second ballot shall be held. If the result remains tied the Chair of the General Meeting will have the deciding vote except when the election is for the role of Chair, when the Vice-Chair will have the deciding vote.

- d) The Committee may call a Special General Meeting at any time. If at least ten members of the Group request such a meeting in writing stating the business to be considered the Secretary shall call such a meeting without delay. At least 21 days' notice must be given and the notice must state the business to be discussed.

14. Procedure at general meetings

All general meetings shall be chaired by the Chair appointed at the preceding Annual General Meeting or, in his/her absence, the Vice-Chair. If both the Chair and Vice Chair are absent another appropriate person shall be appointed at the beginning of the meeting.

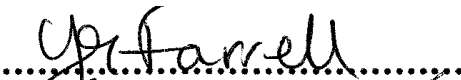



The Secretary, or some other person specially appointed by the meeting, shall keep a full record of proceedings at every general meeting. There shall be a quorum when 10 persons or one tenth of the membership, whichever is the lesser, are present.

15. Alterations to the Constitution

- a) The Committee is committed to reviewing the Constitution and the good practice of Houghton Regis Helpers every three years, or sooner if deemed necessary.
- b) No alteration or addition to this Constitution shall be made except at a General Meeting. This Constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the Group members present and voting at a General Meeting. At least 21 days' notice must be given to all Group members.

16. Dissolution

If the Committee decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Group it shall call a General Meeting of all the members of the Group, of which not less than 21 days' notice shall be given. If the proposal is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting the Committee shall have the power to realise any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities. Disposal of those assets shall be to organisations or individuals who have previously provided funds, assets or sponsorship, as determined by the General Meeting (or the Committee in the absence of direction from the General Meeting). If disposal of assets cannot be achieved in this way the Committee will seek legal guidance from Beds Rural Communities Charity.

NAME:	SIGNATURE:	POSITION/ROLE
YVONNE FARRELL		CHAIR
T.J. BORDKIN		VICE CHAIR
BRIAN MEW		TREASURER
JENNY GALLOCCI		SECRETARY