



Community Empowerment Network (Stoke-on-Trent)

Constitution (Version 3) - Updated September 09

The constitution was adopted on the 10th day of September 2009.

Name

The name of the group is Community Empowerment Network (Stoke- on-Trent)
(Hereinafter known as the CEN)

Area of Benefit

The CEN will cover the area within the boundaries of the City of Stoke-on-Trent.

Vision Statement

“The Community Empowerment Network (Stoke-on-Trent) is a network dedicated to enabling the residents of Stoke-on-Trent to have their voices heard and for them to influence decision making at every level in the City”

Aims

- To provide an opportunity that will allow residents to share experience and knowledge
- To represent the views and opinions of the residents of Stoke-on-Trent
- To be a strong voice for communities and ensure effective representation on to the Local Strategic Partnership Boards
- To work together with other agencies for the improvement of the city
- To be an independent network
- To bring a genuine community perspective to partnership working and decision making
- To be inclusive and value diversity
- To promote a caring and sharing community

Powers and Duties

- The power to raise funds and invite and receive contributions
- The power to organise activities, events, discussions and to produce leaflets and other publicity material
- The power to consult the public by arranging meetings and surveys

- The power to co-operate with other bodies and statutory authorities and to exchange information and advice with them.
- The power to purchase, lease or hire property in furtherance of the aims
- The power to pay reasonable out of pocket expenses to steering group members
- The power to arrange any insurance cover necessary against all such risks incurred by the CEN and volunteers in the course of their duties
- The power to do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the aims
- Has a duty to ensure that information about its role and its work is fed back to the members at regular and appropriate intervals

Membership

Membership of the CEN shall be open to all resident and community groups that provide a service to the people of Stoke-on-Trent wherever the group is based.

Community Group means a group that has no paid employees.

Membership will be open to elected members (Councillors) but they cannot be a member of the steering group.

Steering Group

The steering group will be accountable and responsible for the following:

- To support and advise on the future development of the CEN and ensure fitness for purpose.
- To communicate the work of the steering group to the wider CEN membership.
- To develop CEN policies, strategies and forward plans.
- To arrange meetings and events and inform members to keep them up to date with progress.
- To develop and maintain a communication strategy.
- Minutes will be kept as a record of meetings.

Steering Group Membership

The steering group will consist of up to 15 members including LSP representatives.

- Steering group members must be individual members of the CEN or affiliated to a community group that has CEN membership.
- Steering group membership (for the first election in 2009) will be split on a one and two year appointment to ensure the continuation of skills and abilities of the group (those receiving the highest number of votes will be appointed for two years). Following this, elections will be held every 2 years.
- The positions within the steering group will be officer posts:- chair (will automatically hold the position of Local Strategic Partnership Board

Representative), vice chair, secretary and treasurer plus 4 Local Strategic Partnership representatives and general members.

- Steering group members can hold a position of officer and LSP rep if they so wish. Steering group members can not hold two officer positions.

Elections

For full election process please see the Steering Group Nomination Pack, which will be available when the election process commences.

- Candidates can nominate themselves.
- If you are being nominated either as a member of a group or as an individual, you must have one supporting signature.
- A maximum of one person from any community group can be nominated by the group.
- Candidates must submit a written statement of no more than 150 words and a passport photograph, and have to declare all groups to which they are affiliated (affiliated groups can be listed separately).
- Candidates are required to speak at a “meet the candidates night” prior to elections.
- Steering group membership (for the first election in 2009) will be split on a one and two year appointment to ensure the continuation of skills and abilities of the group (those receiving the highest number of votes will be appointed for two years). Following this, elections will be held every 2 years.
- Elections will be held by a postal ballot, all CEN members (i.e. those who have completed a membership form which has been received and acknowledged by the Community Empowerment Network) will receive a numbered postal ballot.
- The Elected Steering Group will then decide which of them will serve as the CEN representatives on each of the Local Strategic Partnership Groups. It will also decide who are the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and General Members of the CEN Steering Group.

Annual General Meeting

There will be an annual general meeting which will be held within 15 months of the previous AGM. Members shall be given at least 21 days notice.

The steering group shall present a report on its work for the preceding year.

Election of the steering group will take place at the meeting.

General and Extraordinary General Meeting

The steering group may at any time call a general or extraordinary general meeting (EGM) of the CEN stating the business to be discussed. At least 21 days notice will be given for EGMs.

An EGM may also be called by the steering group if a written request is received from a member. The member requesting the meeting must obtain signatures from 20 different CEN members.

Membership meetings will be held a minimum of 4 times per year.

Amendments

Amendments to the constitution will only be made at the AGM. Although the membership will give the steering group the power to change the constitution in an emergency situation, any changes will be notified at the next open meeting.

Conflict Resolution/Complaints

All complaints should be made in writing to the chair or vice chair of the steering group in the first instance. If you are not satisfied with the response of the chair/vice chair then you should put your dissatisfaction in writing to the steering group. A decision will be reached by the steering group and this will be final and binding on all parties.

Please see appendix 1 for meeting protocols.

Dissolution

The Community Empowerment Network may be dissolved at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose and must be advertised 21 days before the meeting. Such a proposal to dissolve the Community Empowerment Network shall take effect only if agreed by two thirds of the majority members present and voting at the meeting.

Surplus funds of the Community Empowerment Network, if it is dissolved, shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institutions or voluntary organisations having similar objectives as the Community Empowerment Network.

SIGNED (Chair, Interim Steering Group): Carol Beardsall