

Beech Hill Steering Committee (“BHSC”)

Constitution

1. Background

The Beech Hill Village Plan (“Plan”) was created during 2012 following a village survey in April 2012. The views of villagers as expressed in the survey were reviewed and summarised by a Village Plan committee. A fully documented plan was produced containing a list of recommended actions. These actions were distilled from the survey and the committee fully agreed that they represented the views expressed in the survey. The list was prioritised and categorised to allow follow on actions to be properly focussed.

The Plan was formally endorsed by West Berkshire Council (WBC) on 8 March 2013.

At a public meeting in Beech Hill Memorial Hall on 11 November 2012 a summary of the Plan was presented. Many people expressed support for the way ahead and signed on to give active support to help implement the actions.

One of the main proposals put forward at the public meeting was to form a Beech Hill Steering Committee (“BHSC”). The Plan Committee did a lot of hard work to analyse the survey and create a Plan with actions. The next step was seen as the implementation phase and the proposal was made that a BHSC be formed to manage the on-going implementation of the Plan and its development and reappraisal in future years.

2. Goal

The overall aim of BHSC is to involve people and community groups in facilitating improvements to the day to day life and environment of the Parish of Beech Hill (“the Community”), by facilitating activities, events, and a way of life that will enhance the lives of people who live and work in the Community.

3. Objectives

- 3.1. To ensure that the BHSC maintains close contact with, and involves the Community to ensure that projects address identified priorities.

- 3.2. To seek out and work with partners to ensure the delivery of those projects and action plans.
- 3.3. To identify and apply for sources of funding.
- 3.4. To review regularly projects to ensure their progress and to identify where changes are needed.
- 3.5. To promote actively the interests of the Community and those people who live and work in the Community.
- 3.6. To pursue good working relationships with all the key organisations and business in Community , as well as with neighbouring communities.

4. Structure and Administration

BHSC is an unincorporated association of organisations and individuals representing the Community and its immediate environs.

5. Powers

In furtherance of its aims and objectives BHSC shall have the power to receive funds and undertake financial transactions necessary to conduct its business for the benefit of the Community. Activities may include and not be limited to the following.

Seek funding and support in kind to assist in the running of the BHSC and for the delivery of agreed projects.

Take appropriate action to influence local and regional decision-making as it affects the achievement of the main purpose and objectives of the BHSC.

Work with interested parties to establish groups and organisations to deliver key priorities.

Hold public consultation and exhibitions and to publicise revised priorities as appropriate.

Do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the purpose and objectives of BHSC.

6. Responsibilities

In exercising the above powers BHSC, as an unincorporated association, will take account of the risks involved in not being incorporated and will make appropriate arrangements to protect individual members of BHSC, including appropriate insurance cover.

BHSC will produce and publish an annual report to demonstrate progress towards achievement of objectives and to account for income and expenditure during the previous financial year ending on 31 March . This will be made available at the Annual General Meeting (“AGM”).

7. Membership of the BHSC Committee (“the Committee”)

BHSC will consist of a committee that carries out agreed activities to promote the objectives and priorities. The structure of the Committee shall be as follows:

There shall be four elected members elected annually as

Chairman

Vice Chairman

Secretary

Treasurer

One Committee member shall be nominated by each of the following bodies:

Beech Hill Parish Council

Beech Hill Allotments Trust

St Mary’s Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The Village Shop At Beech Hill

Beech Hill Memorial Hall

Beech Hill Baptist Chapel

In addition there shall be one elected member not aligned to any formal Community organisation.

The Committee may, at its discretion, extend the number of members by one and may co-opt up to two members in any one year to fill vacancies.

Election shall be either by public or self-nomination. Nomination shall be in writing or by email to the official email or postal address for the BHSC, not later than five days before the date of the AGM. Committee members shall be elected by a simple majority vote, either by ballot slip or show of hands at the AGM.

8. AGM

BHSC will hold an AGM within 15 months of its inaugural meeting, and there should be no more than 15 months between subsequent AGMs. The AGM will be open to any interested parties, and people who live or work in the Community will be entitled to speak and vote. The business of the AGM will include the following matters to be discussed and decided upon:

- Receiving the annual report and accounts for the preceding financial year from the Committee
- Electing/re-electing officers of the Committee
- Reviewing and agreeing priorities for the forthcoming year
- Reviewing and agreeing any changes to the constitution

9. Special General Meeting (“SGM”)

The Committee may vote to have a SGM of the BHSC at any time. If at least ten people living or working in the Community request such a meeting in writing stating the business to be considered, the Committee shall call a meeting. At least 21 days’ notice must be given and the notice must state the business to be discussed.

10. Notice of General Meetings

Any AGM or SGM will be publicised through the Beech Hill Village website, Community notice boards and other media, giving at least 21 days’ notice.

11. Dissolution

BHSC may be dissolved by a decision taken at a general meeting provided that 21 days’ notice has been given that this will be an agenda item. A vote of two thirds of those present and voting at the meeting in favour of dissolution is required for the BHSC to cease operating. Directions as to the disposal of any assets shall also be decided at this meeting, except in the case of grants where monies or assets are given and where the grant giver has specified the course of action to take.

12. BHSC Committee membership and working methods

The BHSC Committee will have a membership of interested parties who live or work in the Community, either through self-nomination or co-option. Membership will be encouraged to represent the wide range of interests within the Community.

13. Meetings of the Committee

The Committee will meet every two months or more frequently if required to organise the projects being carried out, address issues as they arise, feed in views and information to aid BHSC decisions, or to raise concerns about the operating of the BHSC. The Secretary will undertake recording of meetings and will distribute agendas in advance of meetings. Records of meeting shall be made available to the Community.

14. Decision making within the Committee

The preference is to reach decisions by consensus. When a vote is necessary, each member of the Committee present at the meeting shall have one vote. All decisions shall be through a majority voting system. Where votes cast in any matter are equal then the Chair shall have a casting vote in addition to a vote as a member. No vote shall be taken on any matter unless there is a minimum of 7 members at a Committee meeting.

15. Working parties and volunteers

The main role of the Committee is to prioritise and gain funding for the Community's projects. Additional volunteers, specialist teams and possible consultants may be required to carry out any investigations and do the work involved on projects. The Committee will maintain a list of volunteers and will ask volunteers to take on particular projects as necessary.

16. Financial Matters

16.1. Policies

The Treasurer is responsible for the accounting policies. All changes to accounting policies are to be approved by the Committee. The Committee shall not by vote or other means make personal funds available to a Committee member for their time or expenses incurred in being a

Committee member without obtaining a majority vote of the public at a AGM or Special Meeting. Committee members, volunteers or others so authorised may be re-imbursed for expenses necessarily incurred in carrying out BHSC activities if authorised in advance.

16.2. Records

The Treasurer will keep accurate and complete records of all financial transactions.

16.3. Bank Account

All bank accounts will require at least 2 signatures for payments.

16.4. Reporting

The Treasurer will report the financial status of BHSC to the Management Committee on a regular basis, at least quarterly in any financial year.

The annual accounts will be independently reviewed prior to the AGM and approved at the AGM.

17. Complaints Procedure

If any Beech Hill village resident has cause for complaint against the Village Action Group as a whole, any member of the Steering Committee or any of the affiliated groups, then the nature of the complaint must be submitted in writing – in the first instance to the Chairman of the Steering Committee.

Failing that, or if the nature of the complaint involves the chairman, the complaint will be referred to a group of three village residents agreed by both parties; none of whom have a direct connection with either party nor any connection with the nature of the complaint.

Their decision will be final, and binding on both parties.