



Constitution

We are a group of local residents working together to create a park that serves the local community. The Friends meet regularly, put on events and make grant applications to improve the park. We do not receive council or government funding, so we rely totally on sponsorship and donations and the support of local people. Our volunteers are people who enjoy the park and have decided to put something back in any way they can from organising litter picks to throwing full blown events.

1. Name

- The group will be called “Friends of Friendly Gardens”.
- The group will be constituted as an independent group, with representatives from local community.
- The group will work in close partnership with the Lewisham Council, the Council’s Park Management Team and other partners and stakeholders.

2. Aims

- To protect and promote Friendly Gardens
- To improve and enhance the quality of Friendly Gardens
- To improve biodiversity
- To help improve staffing and management of Friendly Gardens
- To ensure involvement of friends / user groups as partners in the management of Friendly Gardens
- To encourage use and appreciation of our parks and open spaces in general
- To help secure resources for Friendly Gardens
- To encourage active volunteering in Friendly Gardens
- To organise events in liaison with the Council, its contractors, its consultants, and other organisations
- To raise funds and make bids for grant aid or other external funding as may be available.
- To work together with other local groups such as the Council, schools, neighbourhood associations, and the police towards the preservation of the parks and gardens

3. Membership and voting rights

- *Membership* – Membership is open to members of the community who share and support the aims of the group.

- *Voting* – Each member is entitled to one vote. Local councillors will not have voting rights.
- *Revocation or Refusal of Membership* – This shall be at the discretion of the Committee, when it has become apparent that the member does not share the aims of the group. The member has a right to be heard by the committee before a decision is made and may be accompanied by a friend.
- *Equal Opportunities* – The group is open to all who wish to join, so long as they subscribe to, and agree with, the aims of the association.

4. Finance

- *Money will only be used for the group's purposes and the treasurer will keep accounts.*
- The treasurer will report annually at the AGM.
- If a bank account is opened, all cheques must be signed by two committee members.
- Committee members cannot receive any money from the group with the exception of refunding reasonable out of pocket expenses.
- The treasurer should be notified of spending decisions and agree to the expenditure inline with managing our resources responsibly.

5. Committee Meetings

- The organisation will hold regular meetings (a minimum of four per year). All members shall be entitled to attend, and these meetings will be publicised. Local councillors and representatives from Lewisham Council and their Parks Management Team will be invited to attend.
- Such officers shall be appointed as are required to conduct the administration of the organisation. These will include a co-chairs, secretary and treasurer. The number of officers and their roles may be altered to reflect the changing needs of the organisation as per the constitution.

6. Annual General Meetings

- The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held each year in January. Fourteen days' notice will be given to members prior to the AGM and will include details of the agenda.
- A quorum of five members is required to make any decisions on behalf of the forum or to make amendments to the constitution, one of which must be one of the co-chairs, treasurer, or secretary.
- The roles of co-chair, treasurer and secretary will be voted in at AGMs and each user group is entitled to one vote. Those seeking office must be on the membership list for at least 6 months before being proposed for office.
- The treasurer will present an annual report and accounts at the AGM.

7. Special General Meetings

- Special General Meetings may be called by the committee for the following reasons. All members must be given 14 days' notice, including explanation of proposed changes. All decisions require a two thirds majority of those voting.
- *Changing the Constitution* – The constitution may be changed at an AGM or at a Special General Meeting.
- *Emergency Special General Meetings* – to allow the members to decide on important issues.

8. Dissolution

The group may be dissolved by a vote of two-thirds majority of members present and voting at a Special General Meeting. Any monies or property remaining after the payment of debts must be returned to the appropriate funder(s) or given to a group with similar, charitable aims. The committee will remain in office and take responsibility for managing the dissolution of the group.

9. Adoptions of this constitution

This constitution was adopted by the members and duly elected committee present at the meeting of 7th July 2023. The signatories below will serve as the committee until the next AGM, to be held within one year of ratification (14th September 2023).

Signed:

Chair, Friends of Friendly Gardens

Date:

Signed:

Secretary, Friends of Friendly Gardens

Date:

Signed:

Treasurer, Friends of Friendly Gardens

Date: