

**Hastings and Rother
Disability Forum**

Constitution

1. Interpretations

Throughout this constitution the following interpretations apply.

“The Forum”	Means the Hastings and Rother Disability Forum
“The Association”	Means the East Sussex Association for the Disabled (Charity No 1042071 & Company No 2979027) or and name by which it is subsequently known.
“The Committee”	Means the Committee as defined in section 7(a) of this constitution.

2. Name & Status

The name of the group shall be the “Hastings and Rother Disability Forum” and shall be a branch of the East Sussex Association for the Disabled and governed by the Memorandum and Articles of the Association.

3. Aims

The Aims of the Forum shall be:

- a. To ensure the appropriate provision of services for people with physical or sensory impairments in Hastings and Rother.
- b. To promote the right of disabled people to achieve full integration and equality of opportunity in society.

4. Powers

All powers within the constitution are those which are delegated to the Forum by the Association and must be exercised in a way which is consistent with Memorandum and Articles of the Association. The Association has the right as well as the obligation to intervene if the activities developed by the group are deemed not to be in keeping with the Association’s Memorandum and Articles or contrary to the best interest of the Association as a whole. On the normal course of events, the Association desires to delegate as much as possible and the Forum may have the power to;

- i. consult, co-operate and liaise with individuals and organisations
- ii. organise meetings, exhibitions, courses and other events
- iii. survey, research, inform, educate and campaign on issues which affect disabled people
- iv. affiliate to local, regional, national and international disability related organisations
- v. obtain, collect, receive and hold monies for the purposes contained within the constitution
- vi. provide services to disabled people
- vii. The Forum shall not enter into any legal or financial commitment or negotiate any such commitment unless the commitment has been explicitly authorised by the Association in advance.

5. Equal Opportunities Statement

The Forum recognises that people with physical or sensory impairments and other sections of the community are discriminated against. In working to achieve its aims, the forum is committed to ensuring that no person or persons receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of type of impairment, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, because they are HIV positive or have AIDS, have a low income, or because they are disadvantaged by any other conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified.

6. Forum Membership

- a. Full membership of the Forum shall be open to any disabled person with physical or sensory impairments over the age of sixteen and living in the Hastings and Rother area.
- b. Associate membership of the Forum shall be open to any individual not eligible for full membership, who supports the Aims of the Forum. Associate membership will also be available to organisations which support the Aims of the Forum. Membership or organisations will be through one named individual or deputy who shall act as a representative of that organisation.
- c. The membership fee, if any, shall be decided by the Forum members at the Annual General Meeting.
- d. The Committee shall have the power to refuse or end membership of any individual or organisation provided that:
 - 1) There is, in the opinion of the Committee, a good reason for doing so
 - 2) The applicant or member is informed of the proposal or end their membership and the reasons for it.
 - 3) The member is given the opportunity to be heard by the Committee before a final decision is taken.
- e. Four Full members of the Forum shall be elected by the membership to be Members of the Association and shall exercise all rights and obligations of membership including voting at all Association General Meetings.

7. Committees

- a. The management of the Disability Forum shall be delegated to a Committee made up of no less than seven and no more than eighteen Forum members.
- b. A staff member of the Association shall be an ex-officio committee member with the right to attend and speak at all meetings but with no voting rights.
- c. All committee members, with the exception of the ex-officio staff member of the Association, will be elected at the Annual General Meeting.

- d. Committee Members will be elected to serve on the Committee until the conclusion of the subsequent Annual General meeting and will be eligible for re-election.
- e. The committee shall consist of at least 75% full members. If this percentage is not achieved upon election at an Annual General Meeting or the percentage falls below 75% during the year, every effort should be made to achieve this percentage as soon as possible.
- f. The Committee shall meet at least six times a year
- g. The quorum at Committee meetings shall be 50% of Committee members.
- h. The Committee may co-opt Forum members onto the committee to fill any vacancies that may arise during its year of office or to achieve the conditions of section 7 (c).
- i. The Committee shall have the power to remove elected and co-opted members from the Committee. This may be done either as a result of misconduct, or if a member fails to attend three consecutive committee meetings without giving apologies provided that:
 - 1) There is, in the opinion of the Committee, a good reason for removing the member
 - 2) The member is informed of the proposal to refuse or end their committee membership and the reason for it.
 - 3) The member is given the opportunity to be heard by the Committee before a final decision is taken.
- j. The Committee may delegate any part of it's business to a sub-committee as necessary
- k. Sub-committees must consist of at least four people. Sub-committees may co-opt persons who have skills, knowledge or experience valuable to furthering the Aims of the Forum. Co-opted persons must never constitute more than 50% of the sub-committee. At least 50% of sub-committee members must be disabled people.

8. Open Meetings

The Forum will hold Open Meetings as necessary to consult and liaise on either general or specific disability issues.

9. Annual General Meeting

- a. An Annual General Meeting will be held each year at intervals of not more than 18 months.
- b. The business of the Annual General Meeting shall include, the presentation of the Annual Report, the election of the Forum Committee and the election of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the Forum.
- c. Officers should not normally hold the same post for more than three consecutive years.

- d. At least fourteen days notice of the date, time, venue, and Agenda shall be given to all full and associate members of the Forum.

10. Extraordinary General Meetings

- a. Extraordinary General Meeting may be convened at any time at the discretion of the Committee or at the request in writing, Braille or on tape of at least 10 members of the forum.
- b. The ex-officio staff member from the Association will have the right to call an Extraordinary General Meeting to consider any issue that may threaten the status of the Forum as a part of the Association.
- c. At least fourteen days notice must be given of the date, time venue and the reason for calling the meeting, to all full and associate members.

11. Voting

- a. Only full members are entitled to vote at Annual General Meetings and Extraordinary General Meetings.
- b. All members of the Committee, whether full or associate members shall be able to vote at Committee meetings, with the exception of the ex-officio staff member from the Association who will have no vote.
- c. In the event of a tied vote the Chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

12. Finances

- a. All funds received by the Forum shall be paid into a bank or building society account in the name of The East Sussex Association for the Disabled (HRDF) or other name by which the Association is subsequently known.
- b. Funds shall only be used to meet the cost of agreed projects and activities.
- c. Committee members shall be entitled only to receive legitimate out of pocket expenses incurred through involvement in activities associated with the work of the Forum or the Association.
- d. The financial year of the Forum shall be the same as the financial year of the Association.
- e. At the end of the financial year accounts shall be prepared and presented to the Annual General Meeting of the Forum.
- f. The Treasurer shall submit a statement of the financial position at Committee meetings and accounts shall be made available for inspection at the request of any Committee member.
- g. The Treasurer will report all financial activities to the Directors of the Association at least annually, or when requested.

13. Altering the Constitution

- a. The constitution may be amended by resolution passed by a simple majority of the full members present at any Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting.
- b. Notice of resolutions to amend the Constitution shall be given in writing, Braille or on tape to the Secretary no less than 28 days before the Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting.
- c. No amendment may be made to the constitution which alters the relationship between the Forum and the Association without prior consent to the management committee of the Association.

14. Winding up the organisation

- a. The Forum may be dissolved at any time by a resolution passes by a two thirds majority of those present and voting at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting. At least fourteen days notice must be given to all members specifying that this is the purpose of the meeting.
- b. The Association must be informed in advance of any intent to dissolve the Forum.
- c. Any assets remaining after satisfaction of any proper debts or liabilities shall be transferred to the general account of the Association.
- d. In the event of the Association ceasing to operate, the Forum shall also cease to operate as currently constituted.
- e. If the Forum ceases to be part of the Association, the constitution must be re-drafted to remove any reference to the Association.

15. Constitutional Disputes

- a. In all matters of dispute on the interpretation of this Constitution or on all matters on which the Constitution is silent, the Chair of the meeting shall give a decision.
- b. No interpretation can be taken which conflicts with the Memorandum & Articles of the Association

End

Constitution adopted 1st October 1994

Amended 25th September 1996