

THE GROUP'S CONSTITUTION

FRIENDS
of



1. NAME

The name of the group is **Friends of Berrylands Nature Reserve**.

2. AIM

To improve Berrylands Nature Reserve, for the benefit of both wildlife and the local community, and where possible support other local green spaces.

3. OBJECTIVES

The group will fulfil its aim by:

- i. Improving the nature reserve as a habitat for wildlife, primarily local native species, with a goal of increasing biodiversity.
- ii. Promoting the health and well-being of the residents of the area and working together as residents regardless of age, ethnic origin, ability, sex, belief or political affiliation, recognising the value of our many differences.
- iii. Involving local people with making improvements to the nature reserve and associated activities.
- iv. Educating local people about their local wildlife and environment as well as promoting good conservation and environmental practices, especially to young people through local schools, clubs and organisations.
- v. Carrying out practical conservation and land management activities with local people and in conjunction with statutory and non-statutory organisations.
- vi. Organising meetings, nature walks, talks & events for group members and the wider local community.
- vii. Promoting healthy, fun and safe use of the nature reserve by the community that is at all times considerate to wildlife there.
- viii. Publicising and promoting work, activities, events and information that aligns with our aim and objectives.
- ix. Raising funds and receiving contributions, where appropriate, to finance work.
- x. Opening bank accounts and responsibly managing the group's finances.
- xi. Maintaining transparency to the community about what the group is doing.
- xii. Making rules and standing orders for categories of members and their rights.
- xiii. Taking out necessary and suitable insurances as well as ensuring all activities follow relevant Health & Safety rules & regulations.
- xiv. Working with similar groups and local community organisations, and exchanging information and advice with them.
- xv. Taking any action that is lawful, which would help the group fulfil its aims.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- i. Membership of Friends of Berrylands Nature Reserve shall be open to anyone who:
 - a. is interested in helping the group achieve its aim,
 - b. is willing to abide by the rules of the group and
 - c. pays the annual membership fee.
- ii. Membership is open to all ages.
- iii. Organisation memberships may be available at the discretion of the Management Committee.
- iv. Membership will begin as soon as the membership form is completed and application process completed.
- v. Every member over the age of 16 shall have one vote at general meetings.
- vi. The Management Committee shall have the power to refuse membership to an applicant, where it is considered such membership would be detrimental to the aims, purposes or activities of the group.
- vii. Termination of membership.
 - a. Any member may resign his/her membership at any time. Any membership fees already paid cannot be refunded. If a member fails to complete the renewal process at the end of each year's membership they will be contacted by a member of the committee, who will then decide if that member is deemed to have resigned.
 - b. A Committee Member may terminate or suspend the membership of any member, if in its opinion his/her conduct is prejudicial to the interests and objectives of the association, PROVIDED THAT the individual member or representative of the member organisation (as the case may be) shall have the right to be heard by the Management Committee, and may be accompanied by a friend, before the final decision is made.
- viii. Further information on membership types, fees and benefits can be found in a separate document.

5. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE & OFFICERS

- i. Friends of Berrylands Nature Reserve shall be administered by a Management Committee.
- ii. The Management Committee will consist of no less than 5 members and no more than 10 members. It will be composed of a minimum of 3 officers and 2 committee members, and there must always be more officers than members on the committee. This means that the committee should only initially increase in size if new officer roles are required.
- iii. All committee members must be members of the group.
- iv. The following officers must be elected:
 - a. Chairperson
 - b. Treasurer
 - c. Secretary
- v. Additional officer roles may include but are not limited to:
 - a. Vice Chairperson
 - b. Communications Officer
 - c. Membership Secretary
- vi. Committee members are elected to stand for a 1 year term and must then either step down or be re-elected; if a member did neither it would be taken that they have automatically resigned. There is no limit to how many terms an individual may stand for if elected.
- vii. In the event of an officer standing down before the end of their current term, a replacement will be elected at the next General Meeting of members, if the position is still required.
- viii. A motion of no-confidence may be brought against any committee member by a petition signed by 20% of members or a two thirds majority vote at a general meeting. If such a motion was successfully raised, a Special General Meeting would be held at which a formal vote would take place and a two thirds majority of those present and voting would be required to remove the officer from post.

6. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- i. The Management Committee shall meet at least twice per year and ideally once per quarter.
- ii. The quorum for a Committee Meeting shall be 3 members.
- iii. The committee shall be accountable for the members at all times.

- iv. All committee members shall be given at least 7 days notice of a meeting unless it is deemed an emergency meeting.
- v. Any committee member not attending two consecutive meetings without apology will be contacted by the committee and asked if they wish to resign.
- vi. If there is a tied vote then the chairperson shall have a second deciding vote.
- vii. Power to set up sub-groups and work parties as deemed necessary who shall be accountable to the committee.
- viii. All meetings must be minuted and available to any interested party.

7. GENERAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

- i. The committee shall call at least one general public meeting each year.
- ii. The Chairperson of the group will normally chair these meetings.
- iii. At least fourteen days notice of such a meeting must be given and advertised in at least 5 public places; this includes public social media channels.
- iv. All General Public Meetings must be minuted and available to any interested party.
- v. The quorum for a General Public Meeting is 5.

8. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

- i. The group shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) at not more than 15 month intervals.
- ii. Where possible members shall be notified personally, otherwise notice will be deemed served by advertising the meetings in at least five public places (including public social media channels and the group website) giving at least fourteen days' notice of the AGM.
- iii. The business of the AGM shall include:
 - a. Receiving a report from the Chairperson, of the group's activities over the year,
 - b. Receiving a report and presentation of the last financial year's accounts from the Treasurer on the finances of the group,
 - c. Electing any new Management Committee positions, as necessary, and confirming the Committee for the following year, and
 - d. Considering any other matter as may be appropriate at such a meeting.
- iv. The quorum for an AGM shall be whichever is the greater number of either 10% of the membership or at least eight persons, of which for the latter no more than four shall be committee members.
- v. For most general matters and unless specified in this document, a motion can be put forward by a proposer and seconder, and to be carried must receive a majority vote of voting members present.

9. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

- i. Special General Meetings may be called by the Committee for the following reasons:
 - a. Changing the Constitution
 - b. Emergency Special General Meetings – to allow the members to decide on important issues.
 - c. Winding up the group
- ii. All members must be given 14 days notice and told what change is proposed.

10. FINANCES

- i. Any money obtained by the group shall be used only to meet the aims of the group.
- ii. A bank account(s) will be opened for the group and will be in the name of the group.
- iii. Any cheque issued shall be signed by at least two of any three nominated signatures.
- iv. For other forms of payment, two approvals must be given whether online via a relevant banking system or via a requisition note signed by both signatories.
- v. Records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given at each meeting.
- vi. The Management Committee is responsible for ensuring that the group stays within its budget.

11. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- i. Amendments to the constitution may only be made at the Annual General Meeting or if deemed by the committee to be urgent at a Special General Meeting.
- ii. Any proposal to amend the constitution must be given to the Secretary in writing.
- iii. The proposal must then be circulated with the notice of meeting.
- iv. Any proposal to amend the constitution will require a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.

12. DISSOLUTION

- i. If there is a proposal or decision by simple majority at a meeting to close down the group, the group may call a Special General Meeting at which the sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the group.
- ii. The group may be wound up if agreed by two thirds of those members present and voting, subject to correct notice being given for that meeting.
- iii. If it is agreed to dissolve the group, all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid, will be donated to a group with similar aims or if none can be found to the Council for them to pass on to others for the benefit of local green spaces. The receiving organisation will ideally be agreed at the meeting which agrees the dissolution.

This constitution was agreed and adopted by the founding members on 5th September 2018.



¹ Berrylands Nature Reserve is officially registered with and recorded by Natural England as Raeburn Open Space Local Nature Reserve.