


Hull CVS Model Constitution

This information sheet is designed to help you write a constitution for your group.

The writing that looks like this is the general wording for you to copy and use in your constitution.

 Grey boxes are for you to write in the details that you agree in your group.

[Notes and guidance are written underneath like this.]

Certain clauses are optional and you could leave them out if you want. They are indicated ✂.

Notes

Adopting a constitution in 5 easy stages.

- 1. Your group needs some members. Start by collecting names of people who want to be part of your group.*
- 2. Get a few volunteers together to look through this model constitution and draft your aims and agree some of the details to suit your group. You can scribble on this handout, but you'll need to copy it out without all the notes in, and with all the details you agree. Get your own copy written up and ready to show everyone.*
- 3. Call a meeting of everyone in your group. Everybody needs to see what your constitution says. Let them ask questions and talk about it. They might want to change some of the details. Put each change to the vote.*
- 4. Get everyone to vote on whether to adopt this constitution or not.*
- 5. Get your new committee members to sign the boxes at the end. This is your constitution. Keep it somewhere safe, and make photocopies to send for example with funding applications.*

You can ring Hull CVS for help with drafting your group's constitution.

Contact Jane Thompson at Hull CVS, 29 Anlaby Road, Hull, HU1 2PG phone 324474 email jthompson@hull-cvs.co.uk

Constitution of ★

[Insert here the name of your group]

1. Name

The name of the group shall be  ★

[You can, if you like, add a line here to say "Hereinafter known as The Group; The Pop In; The Club" or whatever applies to your group, to save having to write out the full name all through the rest of this document. Useful if your group's name is very long.]

2. The aims of the group shall be



[You need to keep your aims broad and brief. You shouldn't list everything that your group does here, just a general statement about what it intends to achieve. So, for instance, instead of saying: "To run a weekly pop in for over 65s, to organise outings and activities, to circulate a newsletter to all the over 65s in the neighbourhood etc" you would say "For the benefit of people over 65, to reduce their isolation and loneliness". If you want your group to be charitable*, you have to be a bit careful about how you phrase your aims. CVS can help you with this. Just give us a ring on 324474. Or if you have access to the internet, you can visit the Charity Commission Website at www.charity-commission.gov.uk/registration/exobjintro.asp for guidance on writing Charitable Objects.]

3. Powers

In order to achieve its aims, ★ may:

- Raise money
- Open bank accounts
- Take out insurance
- Organise activities and events
- Work with similar groups and exchange information and advice with them
- Do anything that is lawful which will help it to fulfil its aims

[This is a standard list copied from the Charity Commission's model constitution, and will suit most groups. It covers most of the things that any community group will want to do. You might want to add things to it but you should leave everything listed here in it. NB if your group wants to rent or lease premises – other than room hire from time to time – you will probably have to register as a Charity in which case this constitution will not do. You will need to use one of the Charity Commission's models. Contact us for further information.]

4. Membership

[NB Membership of your organisation and membership of your activities don't necessarily have to be the same. For instance your organisation might include people with a disability, their carers and professional supporters. But the main activity of your organisation is to run a support group for people with a disability; and membership of that activity is open to anybody with a disability whether or not they are a member of your organisation.]

4.1 Membership of ★ is open to individuals over the age of 18* who are interested in furthering the work of ★ and who have paid any annual subscription agreed by the management committee.

* Your group doesn't need to be a Registered Charity to be charitable. A charitable group is a group with aims that conform to the legal definition of what is charitable. Currently that means Relief of Poverty (including sickness/disability etc); Promotion of Education; Promotion of Religion; certain other things of benefit to the community that may be considered charitable. Certain Charitable Trusts and the Community Fund will only make grants to your group if it is a charitable group. NB This constitution is intended to be suitable for small groups, and will not do if your group wants to register as a charity.

* Legally, young people under 18 cannot be held accountable for things like finances. So they cannot be full voting members. If your group is of or for young people you might need to take some advice about how to give young people control over the organisation at the same time as being properly accountable.

[It may be that you want to define your membership a bit more but take care, if you narrow it down too much, you might not be charitable. You don't have to charge any money at all, but if you don't put anything in here about a subscription, you won't be able to introduce a charge later if you need to, without changing your constitution. And the management committee can agree a charge of nothing at all. You might want to add other categories of membership, e.g. junior membership for under 18s, associate membership for certain categories of people, group membership for other groups. You will need to think about their rights to vote at your AGM or be on your committee and write that in here too.]

4.2 Every member will have one vote.

4.3 The management committee may end the membership of any member for any good reason, by a majority vote at a committee meeting.

[This might be a helpful clause to have in. If somebody was doing something to undermine your group or damage it, you might need to be able to stop them being a member.]

5. Management

5.1 ★ [redacted] will be administered by a Management Committee of not less than 3 members and not more than [redacted] elected at the Annual General Meeting.

[You can choose a maximum number, e.g. 6. It needs to be numerous enough to be fair, and small enough to be manageable. You should decide the number first before you start to choose committee members. You will also need to decide in advance whether your members will vote for people to take on the various positions, or whether the new committee will vote its own officers at its first meeting after the AGM.]

5.2 The Officers of the Management Committee shall be the Chairperson, the Secretary and the Treasurer.

[You can decide whether these officers are to be elected at the AGM by the members, or by the newly elected committee at its first meeting and write that in here. You could have more officers if there are specific jobs in managing your group that you need a person to take on. But the more complex you make it, the harder it will be to maintain.]

5.3 Decisions will be made by a majority of Committee Members present and voting. ✂ In the case of a tie, the Chairperson will have the casting vote.

[You don't have to give your chairperson the casting vote if you don't want to. Just leave that phrase out – but they only have the casting vote if you decide that in advance and write it here.]

5.4 ✂ The Management Committee may appoint not more than [redacted] co-opted members.

[You might want your committee to be able to co-opt members, for instance to fill gaps if anybody resigns during the year. The total number of co-opted members needs to be small enough so that the co-opted members can never outnumber the elected members.]

5.5 The Management Committee will meet at least [redacted] times a year.

[This figure needs to be the minimum number of meetings your committee must hold. So for example even if your committee will meet monthly, you might decide that it mustn't meet less than 4 times a year. It's better to put a small number here than a large – if you put 12 then your committee must meet 12 or more times a year. But if you put 4, then your committee must only meet 4 times a year, but can meet more if necessary. Remember, there might come a time when you have a struggle to get all your committee together, so make it easy on yourselves.]

5.6 At least [redacted] members of the committee must be present for a Management Committee to take place.

[You could put a number and a percentage, whichever is the greater e.g. “4 members or one third, whichever is the greater”. You need to think here about what is the smallest number of people that can make important decisions. In any case it must not be less than 3. But at the same time it needs to be a manageable number.]

5.7 No member of the management committee shall receive any payment (other than reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses).

6. Finances

6.1 The funds of ★ [redacted] will be paid into an account in the name of ★ [redacted] operated by the Management Committee. All cheques must be signed by at least two members of the Management Committee and must be approved by the Management Committee.

[You MUST have an account in the name of your group that requires two signatures. You can have more people on your bank mandate who can sign cheques, and your committee can decide on its rules about which combinations of people can sign.]

6.2 The funds belonging to ★ [redacted] shall be used only to further the aims of ★ [redacted].

7. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

7.1 There shall be an AGM to be held [redacted].

[Here you could put “in the month of ... or as soon as possible after” or “Within weeks of the end of the financial year” or whatever suits your group.]

7.2 Members will be given at least [redacted] notice.

[You will need to think about who your members are, and what amount of notice would be reasonable and practical. For instance, if you have a lot of members who live over a wide area,

you might need to give e.g. 21 days notice. If your group is small and members are all local, you might only need to give two weeks notice. You might also want to say what the notice should include – i.e. just the date, time and venue? Or the agenda as well?]

7.3 The Management Committee will present the report and accounts of the preceding year at the Annual General Meeting.

7.4 Nominations for election to the Management Committee must be made

[Your group needs to decide whether nominations to the committee can be accepted at the meeting, or need to be made in advance, and how far in advance. If in advance they are normally in writing to the secretary. Write in what you decide here.]

8. Special General Meeting

The Management Committee may call a Special Meeting [redacted] at any time with [redacted] days notice given to all members.

[Your group would need to hold a General Meeting if something cropped up during the course of the year that wasn't covered by your constitution, and so you would need to ask all your members.]

9. Quorum

The quorum for any general meeting will be [redacted] members or one tenth of the membership at the time of the meeting, whichever is the greater.

[You need to decide on the minimum number of members who need to be present to make the decisions of any general meeting – including the AGM or any special General Meeting - valid. That will be your quorum. That number will include management committee members and ordinary members who turn up to a General Meeting. For example, if you say 6 members or one tenth of the membership, and your group has fifty members, your quorum will be 6. You could change the tenth to another proportion e.g. a third. Remember, you have to get a balance between making it manageable, and making it fair.]

10. Alterations to the Constitution

Alterations to the Constitution of [redacted] ★ [redacted] can only be made after a proposal has been circulated to all members with notification of the date, time and place of the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be discussed and voted on. Alterations to the constitution will require approval of two thirds of members present and voting at the meeting.

11. Winding Up

★ [redacted] can be wound up at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose. The proposal to wind up ★ must be advertised 14 days before the meeting. The decision to wind up will require the approval of two thirds of members present and voting at the meeting.

Surplus funds of ★ [redacted] if it is dissolved, will be returned to the donor where possible. If this is not possible any funds left over will be donated to an organisation with similar aims following approval by two thirds of members present and voting at the meeting.

12. Constitution Adopted

This constitution was adopted by the members of ★ [redacted] at a meeting held on [redacted].

[Insert the date of your first General meeting.]

Name	Signature	Position
		Chairperson
		Secretary
		Treasurer
		Committee Member