



## **Constitution and Rules for Use Your Voice**

### **1. Name**

The name of the group shall be 'Use Your Voice'.

### **2. Objects:**

To encourage communities and local & national decision makers to recognise the climate and biodiversity emergency and to take positive steps towards building resilience into communities by all or any of the following means:

1. Use of the arts and education to raise awareness of the climate crisis and the opportunities that it presents.
2. Presentation of public events to the above ends.
3. Supporting individuals and organisations with similar aims in taking positive steps for change.

### **3. Membership**

Membership is open to anyone who:

1. Is aged over 16 years old and
2. Supports the aims of Use Your Voice.

A list of all members will be kept by the Secretary.

### **Ceasing to be a member**

Members may resign at any time in writing to the Secretary.

### **Members' conduct**

Offensive behaviour, including racist, sexist or discriminatory remarks, will not be permitted during group meetings or activities. Anyone behaving in an offensive way or breaking the Equal Opportunities Policy (once adopted) may be dismissed from the group following a Special Resolution.

### **4. Equal Opportunities**

Use Your Voice will not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race (including colour, ethnic or national origin), sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious or political belief, pregnancy or maternity, marital status or age.

### **5. Steering Committee**

The group shall have a steering committee with a maximum of twelve committee members who shall be committee members from the date of adoption until they resign in writing or are dismissed. When a vacancy arises, it may be filled by any person elected by an ordinary resolution at a meeting of the group. Any steering committee member who attends fewer than three meetings in any given year without prior arrangement may be dismissed from the committee following a special resolution.

### **5a Definitions**

'The Group' shall mean the whole membership of Use Your Voice

'The Committee' shall mean the steering committee of 12 members.

## **6. Officers and the committee**

The officers of the group shall consist of the following roles:

- Chair
- Vice-chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Officers will be drawn from the members of the Steering Committee and will be elected by members of the group once a year at the Annual General Meeting. Officers shall serve from the date of their appointment until the next Annual General Meeting or until they either resign in writing or are dismissed by a special resolution.

When a vacancy arises, it may be filled by a committee member elected by an ordinary resolution at a meeting of the group.

An outline of the roles of officers is set out in appendix 1.

## **6. Co-option**

The group shall have the right to co-opt up to 10 non-members to attend meetings of the group to assist with particular specialised matters. These persons shall not be entitled to vote at UYV meetings.

## **7. Annual General Meeting**

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held ideally every 12 months and definitely within 15 months of the previous AGM. The first AGM will be held within 12 months of the date of adoption of this constitution. All members will be notified in writing at least three weeks before the date of the meeting, giving the venue, date and time. Nominations for the group's officers may be made to the Secretary before the meeting, or at the meeting. The quorum for the AGM will be a minimum of 5 members.

At the AGM:

- The Treasurer will present the accounts of UYV for the previous year
- Officers for the next year will be elected
- Any proposals given to the Secretary at least seven days in advance of the meeting will be discussed.

## **8. Ordinary (General) Meetings**

Ordinary Meetings may be called by:-

- The Chair or Secretary.
- Any combination of 5 committee members.

Members must receive notice of ordinary meetings at least seven days before the meeting. At meetings, a quorum shall consist of at least five members. Meetings will be open to the full membership and to the public.

At all meetings, minutes will be taken and reviewed & agreed at the following meeting.

## **9. Rules of procedure for meetings**

Except for special resolutions, all questions that arise at any meeting will be discussed openly and the meeting will seek to find a general consensus that all members can agree to. If a consensus cannot be reached, a vote may be taken by the steering committee and a decision will be made by a simple majority. If the number of votes cast on each side is equal, the chair of the committee shall have an additional casting vote.

### Special resolutions

Special resolutions may only be discussed and voted on when notice in writing of the special resolution has been sent to all members at least seven days before the date of the meeting. Subject to this notice having been issued, a special resolution shall be passed only if supported by two-thirds of the members attending the meeting.

Special resolutions shall be required only for the following:

- Removal of any person from membership of the group
- Removal of any member of the group from office
- Alteration or amendment of the constitution and rules of the group
- Dissolution of the group

### 10. Finance

An account will be maintained on behalf of the group at a bank agreed by the committee. Three signatories will be nominated by the committee (one to be the Treasurer). The signatories must not be related nor members of the same household. All payments will be signed / authorised by two of the signatories.

- For cheque payments, the signatories will sign the cheque
- For BACS payments, electronic authorisation via bank logins will be used.

Records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement provided at the end of each quarter. All money raised by or on behalf of Use Your Voice is only to be used to further the aims of the group, as specified in item 2 of this constitution.

### 11. Amendments to the constitution

Amendments to the constitution may be made by the passing of a special resolution. Any proposal to amend the constitution must be submitted to the Secretary in writing. The proposal must then be circulated with the notice of the meeting. Any proposal to amend the constitution shall be passed only if supported by two-thirds of the members attending the meeting.

### 12. Dissolution

Upon the passing of a special resolution to dissolve the group, all funds and other assets remaining after the settlement of all liabilities shall be donated to a local charitable organisation. The chosen organisation will be agreed at the meeting which agrees the dissolution.

**This constitution was adopted on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

Signed .....Name & Position..... Date.....

Signed .....Name & Position..... Date.....

Signed .....Name & Position..... Date.....

Signed .....Name & Position..... Date.....

## **Appendix 1: Brief role descriptions for officers**

### **1. The Chair's role is to:**

- Chair meetings
- Help the committee/members to work together as a team

### **2. The Vice-Chair's role is to:**

- Chair meetings or the Annual General Meeting in the absence of the Chair
- Act as the Chair when needed.

### **3. The Secretary's role is to:**

- Take minutes at the committee and general meetings
- Maintain a list of the members of the group
- Receive and respond to information requests, emails and letters

### **4. The Treasurer's role is to:**

- Keep financial records for the group
- Keep the group informed of their financial situation