

# **LONDON AND WEST MIDDLESEX NATIONAL TRUST VOLUNTEERS**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **NAME OF THE GROUP**

London and West Middlesex National Trust Volunteers ('The Group'), also known as LWMNTV.

### **OBJECTIVES**

To do practical work for The National Trust and to encourage an interest in The National Trust by means of social activities. Work for bodies other than The National Trust may be undertaken as seen fit by the committee but should not be for the financial gain of any individual person.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Open to all people who are interested in doing practical work for The National Trust. There are no fixed age limits but active members must be over 16. Non-active members are welcome in a supporting role. The 4 membership categories are given below:

**ORDINARY** - pay the agreed subscription, have the right to vote at General Meetings and participate in all the Groups activities and receive all the benefits of membership; this category includes standard, additional and overseas members;

**LAPSED** - are ordinary members of the Group who have not renewed their subscription, who receive communications for a further 2 quarters;

**PATRONS** - support the Group by paying their annual membership fee, but do not have voting rights and do not generally participate in the Groups activities;

**COMPLIMENTARY** (including National Trust staff) - granted at the discretion of the committee to individuals, groups and organisations which support the Group in its running, publicity, weekends etc..

Any member may resign from the Group at any time. The written agreement of at least three quarters of the committee is necessary to expel a member.

### **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

The committee has the power to alter the annual subscription by giving notice to members at least one quarter in advance of the increase date: this notice should be printed in the newsletter. Members must renew their subscriptions within one month of the due date which is 4 quarters after the member joining the group or the member's last renewal date. All members will be issued with an email database record stating the renewal date or the same sent by post. The Group can accept donations. The unused part of the subscription of any member resigning from the Group shall not be refunded.

### **COMMITTEE**

The committee shall consist of elected and honorary committee members. All committee members are entitled to vote at committee meetings. Committee members may resign from the committee at any time in writing. Any elected committee member not attending a single committee meeting over a period of 6 months shall be deemed to have resigned, unless otherwise resolved. All committee members should be ordinary members of the Group.

### **elected members**

There shall be a minimum of three elected committee members and a maximum of twelve. All the elected committee members are to retire at each Annual General Meeting ('AGM') but are eligible for re-election. During its term of office the committee has the power to co-opt Ordinary Members to fill vacancies on the committee. Elected committee members shall hold only one post; more than one may be permitted only if there is no other suitable candidate.

### **honorary members**

There shall be a maximum of 4 honorary committee members who should ideally have been elected committee members for 3 years and have done at least 750 hours practical work for the Group. They normally serve 2 year terms which are designed to be staggered so that their terms of office overlap. Honorary committee members are chosen by the committee, subject to ratification by the next AGM. They are eligible for re-selection at the expiry of their term of office. Any honorary committee member standing for election as an elected committee member cannot hold an honorary post, for the duration of the election and the length of time served as an elected committee member.

### **committee meetings**

General attendance is allowed at committee meetings upon request to the chairman, but only members of the committee are allowed to vote. Committee meetings should be held at a location reasonable to members of the committee. The committee will meet at least twice a year. Quorum shall be the higher of 50% of the members of the committee and 3 members of the committee. Notice and agenda of committee meetings should be circulated at least 5 days before the meeting. Minutes should be circulated to committee members within 21 days after the meeting; minutes should be available to any ordinary member on request to the chairman. The minutes of the meeting should be proposed and adopted by the committee as a true and accurate record of the proceedings, and signed as such by the chairman. Minutes should be kept for a minimum of 3 years.

### **GENERAL MEETINGS**

Only ordinary members of the Group are entitled to vote at general meetings.

### **annual general meetings**

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) should be held within 50 days of the calendar year end. At least 75 days notice must be given to members. Quorum shall be the lower of 50% of the ordinary membership of the Group and 11 ordinary members; if there is not a quorum the meeting shall be rescheduled to take place at the same time and the same place (if possible) the following week and this should continue until a quorum is achieved. One of the honorary committee members not standing for ratification should take the chair or, failing them, the longest serving committee member present. An agenda for the AGM should be published for the start of the meeting.

### **annual general meetings - elections - general**

Elections shall be conducted by the cascade method. The title of each committee post shall be agreed by the committee before nominations are open. An order of election among posts shall also be agreed by the committee and this will be advertised on the nomination form. The title of each post and the order may change from year to year, according to the needs of the Group.

### **annual general meetings - elections - nominations**

Nomination forms for the elected posts should be sent to all ordinary members by email or post at least 75 days before the date of the AGM, also notifying members of the date of the AGM and the date that nominations will close. Nominations for the committee are to be submitted in writing at least 50 days before the AGM and with the signed consent of the nominee. Candidates must be ordinary members of the Group and must be proposed and seconded by ordinary members of the group; they must state which position(s) they are standing for. Each member can stand for a maximum of 3 posts. Each candidate may submit one manifesto with their nomination form for each post they are standing for - these can be up to 50 words in length and must be regarded as accurate; it will be circulated with the ballot paper. The list of nominations will be freely available to all ordinary members of the Group.

### **annual general meetings - elections - procedure**

The election for elected committee members shall be by postal ballot with ballot papers emailed or posted to all ordinary members, together with the agenda of the AGM, at least 20 days in advance of the AGM. All posts will be included on the ballot paper, regardless of how many people are standing for them, together with the name and address of the returning officer. The returning officer is normally an honorary committee member and should not be a candidate in any of the elections. All uncontested posts should be marked as such. All completed ballot papers should be delivered to the returning officer by last post on the day before the AGM and the returning officer will declare the votes against each candidate for each post at the AGM. The results for each post will then be considered, one post at a time, in the order previously agreed by the committee. When a candidate is elected to a post they will no longer be eligible for election to posts further down the 'cascaded' order. This procedure is repeated for each post down the order; if any post should remain vacant by this procedure, co-option(s) by the new committee to fill the vacancy(ies) are allowed. In the event of a tie in the ballot, the Returning Officer shall conduct a secret ballot of those attending the AGM, with the result to be announced at the AGM.

Should all posts in the election be uncontested, then a ballot paper need not be issued; however all ordinary members will be informed of the candidate for each post. Election will be by ratification by AGM.

### **extraordinary general meetings**

A general meeting, which may discuss any business, may be called for in writing by a petition signed by a minimum of the lower of 50% of the ordinary membership of the Group and 20 ordinary members. The Resolution must be first discussed at the next Committee meeting and the business resolved in the best interests of the Group.

Appropriate National Trust staff may be called upon for advice if the matter cannot be resolved.

If an EGM is required, then notification must be given to members within 30 days of the committee meeting, or with the publication of the next newsletter, whichever is shorter. The notification will give details of the Resolution to be discussed.

The EGM must be held within 60 days of the Committee meeting, or to coincide with the AGM, whichever is shorter; however at least 30 days notice of the meeting must be given.

Quorum shall be the lower of 50% of the ordinary membership of the Group and 11 ordinary members. One of the honorary committee members should take the chair or failing them, the longest serving committee member present.

### **resolutions**

Resolutions shall be proposed and seconded by ordinary members & should then be passed by a simple majority of those present and voting, except where otherwise noted within this constitution. If necessary the chair shall have the casting vote. Voting shall be by a show of hands or by a secret ballot if so requested in writing in the petition by the proposer of the resolution.

### **CONSTITUTION**

Every member will be issued with a copy of the constitution. The constitution can only be altered by a three quarters majority of those present & voting at a general meeting, alteration having appeared in the notice of the meeting & on the agenda.

### **DISSOLUTION**

The Group may be dissolved at a General Meeting by resolution, dissolution having appeared in the notice of the meeting and on the agenda, and having a majority of three quarters of those voting. Any remaining assets then pass to The National Trust. Any remaining deficit shall be the responsibility of the whole committee.

## **NEWSLETTER**

The Group should publish a newsletter at least twice per year which will be sent to all members.

## **FINANCE**

### **the groups assets**

The groups assets (e.g. tools, computers) should be depreciated over their useful lives.

### **annual financial statements**

Financial statements shall be prepared on an accruals basis, according to generally accepted accounting practice, for each financial year of the Group. Each financial year shall end on 31 December. The financial statements, accompanied by a Report of the Committee, shall be given to all members attending the Annual General Meeting. The financial statements shall also be available to any member on request.

### **purpose and approval of the financial statements**

Financial statements shall be prepared so as to show a materially accurate view of the income and expenditure and financial position of the Group. These financial statements shall be signed by chairman and treasurer as showing a materially accurate view of the financial position of the Group and the outgoing committee shall present the signed financial statements at the Annual General Meeting where a vote, decided by simple majority, to approve and adopt the financial statements shall be taken.

### **books and records**

All necessary ledgers (which may be manual or computerised) shall be kept in such a format so as to be adequate to prepare financial statements. All evidence required to support the validity of the books and records shall be retained for a minimum of 3 years. Bank statements, ledgers, receipts and invoices themselves are to be retained for a minimum of 3 years.

### **preparation of the financial statements**

The financial statements shall be prepared in a proper manner and such that they shall be understandable to the membership.

### **bank and building society accounts**

The Group shall maintain at least one account at a financial institution of known integrity. No investments of a speculative nature may be made.

The authorised signatories per account shall be any of the committee members, duly nominated to the bank.

### **annual independent examination of the financial statements**

It is desirable that an independent examination of the financial statements is performed, by a person competent to do so, so as to show the financial statements fulfil their purpose as defined above (purpose of the financial statements).