

CONSTITUTION

Of

NNSE – North Northants Social Enterprise Network

July 30th 2024

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Name

1. The name of the association is **North Northants Social Enterprise Network**

Objects

2. The association's objects are:

(a) **EMPOWERING GROWTH:** To bring together a network of social enterprises in North Northamptonshire to empower them to grow their activities, impact and resilience leading to social, environmental and economic benefits for the wider local community and beyond.

(b) **ADVOCACY:** To champion and advocate for social enterprise in the county, especially with local leaders, influencers and decision-makers, ensuring the sector is understood, respected, listened to, supported and recognised for the wide range of commercially sustainable benefits it brings to the local community.

(c) **CONNECTING:** To identify and connect local social enterprises so they are aware of their social enterprise status and able to benefit from collaborating with each other and the resources and opportunities the network provides.

(d) **PROMOTING:** To promote local social enterprises by profiling their work and impact, highlighting achievements, and drawing attention to the potential for collaborations both within the network and with the local authorities, wider community (VCSE) sector, private sector, educational providers and general public.

(e) **SUPPORTING:** To support local social enterprises with assistance, mentoring and training to help them access better funding opportunities, commercial opportunities, skills development, give morale support and provide other resources to help them thrive.

(f) **ENCOURAGING NEW SOCIAL ENTERPRISES:** To encourage and enable new social enterprises in the area to launch and flourish by signposting them to the right professional support, providing

support as a peer network, sharing good case studies and increasing awareness of the potential and benefits of having a social enterprise structure.

(f) **ATTRACTING EXTERNAL INVESTMENT:** To collaborate with key partners such as the local authorities and private business sector to attract external funding and investment into the area to enable the local social enterprise sector to grow.

Powers

3. In pursuance of the objects set out in clause 2 (but not otherwise), the association shall have the following powers: -

(a) To carry on any other activities which further any of the above objects.

(b) To purchase, take on lease, hire, or otherwise acquire, any property or rights which are suitable for the association's activities.

(c) To improve, manage, develop, or otherwise deal with, all or any part of the property and rights of the association.

(d) To sell, let, hire out, license, or otherwise dispose of, all or any part of the property and rights of the association.

(e) To borrow money, and to give security in support of any such borrowings by the association.

(f) To employ such staff as are considered appropriate for the proper conduct of the association's activities, and to make reasonable provision for the payment of pension and/or other benefits for members of staff, ex-members of staff and their dependants.

(g) To engage such consultants and advisers as are considered appropriate from time to time.

(i) To effect insurance of all kinds (which may include officers' liability insurance).

(j) To invest any funds which are not immediately required for the association's activities in such investments as may be considered appropriate (and to dispose of, and vary, such investments).

(k) To liaise with other voluntary sector bodies, local authorities, UK government departments and agencies, and other bodies, all with a view to furthering the association's objects.

(l) To establish and/or support any charity/ social enterprise, and to make donations for any charitable purpose falling within the association's objects.

(m) To form any company which is a charity/ social enterprise with similar objects to those of the association, and, if considered appropriate, to transfer to any such company (without any payment being required from the company) the whole or any part of the association's assets and undertaking.

(n) To take such steps as may be deemed appropriate for the purpose of raising funds for the association's activities.

(o) To accept grants, donations and legacies of all kinds (and to accept any reasonable conditions attaching to them).

(p) To do anything which may be incidental or conducive to the furtherance of any of the association's objects.

General structure

4. The structure of the association shall consist of: -

(a) the MEMBER ORGANISATIONS (social enterprises based in or predominantly active in North Northamptonshire) - who have the right to select one member representative to attend the annual general meeting (and any special general meeting)

(b) the MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES (over the age of 18 years) - who have the right to attend the annual general meeting (and any special general meeting), representing their member organisation and have important powers under the constitution; in particular, the member representatives elect people to serve on the management committee and take decisions in relation to changes to the constitution itself

(b) the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - who hold regular meetings during the period between annual general meetings, and generally control and supervise the activities of the association; in particular, the management committee is responsible for monitoring the financial position of the association. The elected management committee is made up of member representatives from different member organisations.

(d) the FRIENDS - who may be individuals or organisations which also support the objectives of the association. They do not have any voting rights and cannot join the management committee but may join any meeting by invitation when considered appropriate by the management committee.

Qualifications for membership- management committee, member representatives & friends of NNSE

5. Membership shall be open to any social enterprise based in or predominantly working in North Northamptonshire which supports the objectives of the association. A 'social enterprise' is defined as an asset-locked organisation which generates at least 50% of income through sales or payment for services and has a social or environmental mission as its purpose.

(a) Organisations or individuals can apply to become a Friend of NNSE, any application to become a friend of NNSE will be considered by the management committee. Friends do not have to be social enterprises.

6. An employee of the association shall not be eligible to act as a member representative; a person who becomes an employee of the association after admission to membership shall automatically

cease to be a member representative.

Application for membership

7. Any local social enterprise which wishes to become a member organisation must have a senior manager sign, and lodge with the association, a written application for membership. They must name at least one staff member or volunteer to be their member representative. Multiple member representatives from a single member organisation may attend general meetings or the AGM. However, only one member representative per member organisation is entitled to vote or take a place on the management committee at any one time.

8. The management committee may, at its discretion, refuse to admit any organisation/ membership representation or friend to membership.

9. The management committee shall consider each application for membership of both friends and member organisations; the management committee shall, within a reasonable time after the application, notify the applicant organisation's representative of its decision on the application.

Membership subscription

10. No membership subscription shall be payable. However, there may be financial contribution as determined by the association.

Register of members

11. The management committee shall maintain a register of member organisations and friends of NNSE, setting out the full name and address of the member organisation or friend, the names and contact details of any representatives, the date on which they were admitted to membership, and the date on which any organisation ceased to be a member.

Withdrawal from membership

12. Any organisation or friend who wishes to withdraw from membership shall sign, and lodge with the association, a written notice to that effect; on receipt of the notice by the association, they shall cease to be a member.

Expulsion from membership

13. Any member organisation or member representative or friend may be expelled from membership by way of a resolution passed by majority vote at a general meeting (meeting of management committee), providing the following procedures have been observed:-

(a) at least 21 days' notice of the intention to propose the resolution must be given to the member organisation or member representative or friend concerned, specifying the grounds for the proposed expulsion

(b) the member organisation or member representative or friend concerned shall be entitled to be heard on the resolution at a management committee meeting at which the resolution is proposed.

General meetings (meetings of members)

14. The management committee shall convene an annual general meeting in each year (but excluding the year in which the association is formed); not more than 15 months shall elapse between one annual general meeting and the next.

15. The business of each annual general meeting shall include:-

(a) a report by the chair on the activities of the association

(b) consideration of the annual accounts of the association

(c) the election/re-election of members of the management committee, as referred to in clause 30.

16. The management committee may convene a special general meeting at any time.

Notice of general meetings

17. At least 14 clear days' notice must be given (in accordance with clause 63) of any annual general meeting or special general meeting; the notice must indicate the general nature of any business to be dealt with at the meeting and, in the case of a resolution to alter the constitution, must set out the terms of the proposed alteration.

18. The reference to "clear days" in clause 17 shall be taken to mean that, in calculating the period of notice, the day after the notice is posted, and also the day of the meeting, should be excluded.

19. Notice of every general meeting shall be given (in accordance with clause 63) to all the member organisations & friends of the association, and to all the member representatives of the management committee. Meetings may be held online or in person.

Procedure at general meetings

20. No business shall be dealt with at any general meeting unless a quorum is present; the quorum for a general meeting shall be 5 member representatives.

21. If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes after the time at which a general meeting was due to commence - or if, during a meeting, a quorum ceases to be present - the meeting shall stand adjourned to such time and place as may be fixed by the chairperson of the meeting.

22. The chair of the association shall (if present and willing to act as chairperson) preside as chairperson of each general meeting; if the chair is not present and willing to act as chairperson within 15 minutes after the time at which the meeting was due to commence, the members of the management committee present at the meeting shall elect from among themselves the person who will act as chairperson of that meeting.

23. The chairperson of a general meeting may, with the consent of the meeting, adjourn the meeting to such time and place as the chairperson may determine.

24. Every member organisation shall have one vote, which (whether on a show of hands or on a secret ballot) must be given personally by a member representative.

25. If there is an equal number of votes for and against any resolution, the chairperson of the meeting shall be entitled to a casting vote.

26. A resolution put to the vote at a general meeting shall be decided on a show of hands unless a secret ballot is demanded by the chairperson (or by at least two member representatives present in person at the meeting); a secret ballot may be demanded either before the show of hands takes place, or immediately after the result of the show of hands is declared.

27. If a secret ballot is demanded, it shall be taken at the meeting and shall be conducted in such a manner as the chairperson may direct; the result of the ballot shall be declared at the meeting at which the ballot was demanded.

Maximum number of management committee members

28. The maximum number of members of the management committee shall be 9. This does not include advisory members or friends.

Eligibility

29. A person shall not be eligible for election/appointment to the management committee unless they are a member representative of the association. Each member organisation may have a maximum of one member representative on the management committee at any one time.

Election, retirement, re-election

30. At each annual general meeting, the members may (subject to clause 28) elect any member representative to be a member of the management committee.

31. The management committee may at any time appoint any member representative to be a member of the management committee (subject to clause 28).

32. At each annual general meeting, all of the members of the management committee shall retire from office - but shall then be eligible for re-election, members of the management committee can serve for up to 3 terms that do not need to be consecutive. Members of the management committee can stay on in an advisory capacity if the management committee request with no voting rights.

Termination of office

33. A member of the management committee shall automatically vacate office if:-

(a) they become debarred under any statutory provision from being a trustee/ director.

(b) they become incapable for medical reasons of fulfilling the duties of their office and such incapacity is expected to continue for a period of more than six months

(c) they cease to be a member representative of the association

(d)they become an employee of the association

(e)they resign office by notice to the association

(f)they are absent (without permission of the management committee) from more than three consecutive meetings of the management committee, and the management committee resolve to remove them from office.

Register of management committee members

34.The management committee shall maintain a register of management committee members, setting out the full name and organisation of each member of the management committee, the date on which each such person became a management committee member, and the date on which any person ceased to hold office as a management committee member.

Office bearers

35.The management committee members shall elect from among themselves a chair, a treasurer and a secretary, and such other office bearers (if any) as they consider appropriate.

36.All of the office bearers shall cease to hold office at the conclusion of each annual general meeting, but shall then be eligible for re-election.

37.A person elected to any office shall cease to hold that office if they cease to be a member of the management committee or if they resign from that office by written notice to that effect.

Powers of management committee

38.Except as otherwise provided in this constitution, the association and its assets and undertaking shall be managed by the management committee, who may exercise all the powers of the association.

39.A meeting of the management committee at which a quorum is present may exercise all powers exercisable by the management committee.

Personal interests

40.A member of the management committee who has a personal interest in any transaction or other arrangement which the association is proposing to enter into, must declare that interest at a meeting of the management committee; they will be debarred (in terms of clause 52) from voting on the question of whether or not the association should enter into that arrangement.

41.For the purposes of clause 40, a person shall be deemed to have a personal interest in an arrangement if any partner or other close relative of theirs **or** any firm of which they are a partner **or** any limited company of which they are a substantial shareholder or director, has a personal interest in that arrangement.

42.Provided

(a) they have declared their interest

(b) they have not voted on the question of whether or not the association should enter into the relevant arrangement and

(c) the requirements of clause 44 are complied with,

a member of the management committee will not be debarred from entering into an arrangement with the association in which they have a personal interest (or is deemed to have a personal interest under clause 41) and may retain any personal benefit which they gain from their participation in that arrangement.

43.No member of the management committee may serve as an employee (full time or part time) of the association, and no member of the management committee may be given any remuneration by the association for carrying out their duties as a member of the management committee.

44.Where a management committee member provides services to the association or might benefit from any remuneration paid to a connected party for such services, then

(a)the maximum amount of the remuneration must be specified in a written agreement and must be reasonable

(b)the management committee members must be satisfied that it would be in the interests of the association to enter into the arrangement (taking account of that maximum amount)

(c)less than half of the management committee members must be receiving remuneration from the association (or benefit from remuneration of that nature).

45.The members of the management committee may be paid all travelling and other expenses reasonably incurred by them in connection with their attendance at meetings of the management committee, general meetings, or meetings of committees, or otherwise in connection with the carrying-out of their duties.

Procedure at management committee meetings

46.Any member of the management committee may call a meeting of the management committee or request the secretary to call a meeting of the management committee.

47.Questions arising at a meeting of the management committee shall be decided by a majority of votes; if an equality of votes arises, the chairperson of the meeting shall have a casting vote.

48.No business shall be dealt with at a meeting of the management committee unless a quorum is present; the quorum for meetings of the management committee shall be 3.

49.If at any time the number of management committee members in office falls below the number fixed as the quorum, the remaining management committee member(s) may act only for the purpose of filling vacancies or of calling a general meeting.

50. Unless they are unwilling to do so, the chair of the association shall preside as chairperson at every management committee meeting at which they are present; if the chair is unwilling to act as chairperson or is not present within 15 minutes after the time when the meeting was due to commence, the management committee members present shall elect from among themselves the person who will act as chairperson of the meeting.

51. The management committee may, at its discretion, allow any person who they reasonably consider appropriate, to attend and speak at any meeting of the management committee; for the avoidance of doubt, any such person who is invited to attend a management committee meeting shall not be entitled to vote.

52. A management committee member shall not vote at a management committee meeting (or at a meeting of a committee) on any resolution concerning a matter in which they have a personal interest which conflicts (or may conflict) with the interests of the association; they must withdraw from the meeting while an item of that nature is being dealt with.

53. For the purposes of clause 52, a person shall be deemed to have a personal interest in a particular matter if any partner or other close relative of theirs **or** any firm of which they are a partner **or** any limited company of which they are a substantial shareholder or director, has a personal interest in that matter.

Conduct of members of the management committee

54. Each of the members of the management committee shall, in exercising their functions as a member of the management committee of the association, act in the interests of the association; and, in particular, must

(a) seek, in good faith, to ensure that the association acts in a manner which is in accordance with its objects (as set out in this constitution)

(b) act with the care and diligence which it is reasonable to expect of a person who is managing the affairs of another person

(c) in circumstances giving rise to the possibility of a conflict of interest of interest between the association and any other party

(i) put the interests of the association before that of the other party, in taking decisions as a member of the management committee

(ii) where any other duty prevents them from doing so, disclose the conflicting interest to the association and refrain from participating in any discussions or decisions involving the other members of the management committee with regard to the matter in question

(d) Ensure that the association complies with any financial regulation or guidance from the Government.

Delegation to sub-committees

55. The management committee may delegate any of their powers to any sub-committee consisting of one or more management committee members and such other persons (if any) as the management committee may determine; they may also delegate to the chair of the association (or the holder of any other post) such of their powers as they may consider appropriate.

56. Any delegation of powers under clause 55 may be made subject to such conditions as the management committee may impose and may be revoked or altered.

57. The rules of procedure for any sub-committee shall be as prescribed by the management committee.

Operation of accounts and holding of property

58. The management committee will agree a bank account and nominate three signatories to the account. Signatures of two out of three signatories appointed by the management committee shall be required in relation to all operations (other than lodgement of funds) on the bank and building society accounts held by the association; at least one out of the two signatures must be the signature of a member of the management committee.

59. The title to all property (including any land or buildings, the tenant's interest under any lease and (so far as appropriate) any investments) shall be held either in the names of the chair, treasurer and secretary of the association (and their successors in office) or in name of a nominee company holding such property in trust for the association; any person or body in whose name the association's property is held shall act in accordance with the directions issued from time to time by the management committee.

Minutes

60. The management committee shall ensure that minutes are made of all proceedings at general meetings, management committee meetings and meetings of committees; a minute of any meeting shall include the names of those present, member organisations represented and (as far as possible) shall be signed electronically by the chairperson.

Accounting records and annual accounts

61. The management committee shall ensure that proper accounting records are maintained in accordance with all applicable statutory requirements.

62. The management committee shall prepare annual accounts, complying with all relevant statutory requirements; if an audit is required under any statutory provisions or if they otherwise think fit, they shall ensure that an Audit or Independent Examination of such accounts is carried out.

Notices

63. Any notice which requires to be given to a member organisation or friend under this constitution shall be in writing; such a notice may either be given personally to the member representative or by receipted email to the chairperson or secretary.

Dissolution

64. If the management committee determines that it is necessary or appropriate that the association be dissolved, it shall convene a meeting of the members; not less than 21 days' notice of the meeting (stating the terms of the proposed resolution) shall be given.

65. If a proposal by the management committee to dissolve the association is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at the general meeting convened under clause 64, the management committee shall have power to dispose of any assets held by or on behalf of the association - and any assets remaining after satisfaction of the debts and liabilities of the association shall be transferred to a local asset locked not for profit organisation within Northamptonshire having objects similar to those of the association; the identity of the body or bodies to which such assets are transferred shall be determined by the management committee at, or prior to, the time of dissolution.

66. For the avoidance of doubt, no part of the income or property of the association shall (otherwise than in pursuance of the association's charitable purposes) be paid or transferred (directly or indirectly) to the member representatives or member organisations, either in the course of the association's existence or on dissolution.

Alterations to the constitution

67. Subject to clause 68, the constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of those present and voting at a general meeting, providing due notice of the meeting, and of the resolution, is given in accordance with clauses 17, 18 and 19.

68. No amendment to clauses 3, 43, 65 or 66 of the constitution may be made if the effect would be that the association would cease to be an asset locked community association.

69. Any reference in this constitution to a provision of any legislation shall include any statutory modification or re-enactment of that provision in force from time to time.

Initial members of the management committee

71. The initial members of the management committee, and the positions held by each, shall be as set out below.

This constitution was adopted on 30th July 2024

Signature	Name	Member Organisation	Position
<small>DocuSigned by:</small> Alison Holland	Alison Holland	Brightwayz	Chair
<small>DocuSigned by:</small> Jo Moore	Jo Moore	Accommodation Concern	Vice Chair
<small>DocuSigned by:</small> Jane Rowley	Jane Rowley	Youth Works Northamptonshire	Treasurer
<small>Signed by:</small> Rick Ellis	Rick Ellis	Teamwork Trust	Social Impact
<small>DocuSigned by:</small> Emma Kendrick	Emma Kendrick	Laugh out Loud Theatre	
<small>Signed by:</small> Lorna Dodge	Lorna Dodge	Love Corby	Marketing
<small>DocuSigned by:</small> Cathy Armstrong	Cathy Armstrong	The Business Exchange	
<small>Signed by:</small> Mandy Young	Mandy Young	Adrenaline Alley	
<small>Signed by:</small> Ka Chun Li	Ka Chun Li	Comm Mini Bus	

<small>DocuSigned by:</small> Sarah Damani	Sarah Damani	Non-Member, paid capacity with no voting rights.	Secretary
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