

Lewisham Interfaith Forum CONSTITUTION

This constitution was adopted on the INSERT DATE WHEN AGREED at a meeting with Lewisham Interfaith Leaders.

1. Name:

The name of the forum shall be the Lewisham Interfaith Forum (LIF)

2. The aims of the forum shall be:

- a) To represent the faith communities of the London Borough of Lewisham who agree with and uphold the aims of the forum.
- b) To promote knowledge, understanding and mutual respect between the followers of different faiths within the London Borough of Lewisham and beyond.
- c) To encourage partnership and influence with public, private and voluntary organisations to the benefit of all faith groups within the London Borough of Lewisham and beyond, and more generally for the wider public benefit..
- d) To promote community cohesion among people of all faiths and none.
- f) To educate the public in different religious beliefs including an awareness of their distinctive features and their common ground to promote good relations between persons of different faiths.
- g) To promote knowledge and mutual understanding and respect of the beliefs and practices of different religious faiths.
- h) To advance education and raise awareness in equality and diversity in faith.

3. Membership:

- a) Membership is open to any religious congregation/community meeting in the borough of Lewisham. Faith groups meeting outside of the borough who are Lewisham residents can be represented.
- b) Each congregation/community will designate their own representative and pay an annual subscription fee. If unable to attend the meeting the representative can send a substitute.
- c) LIF also welcomes partnership organisations such as Local Authority and the Police to attend.

4. Meetings:

General Meetings of the LIF shall be held at least three times a year.

5. Code of Conduct:

a) It shall be a condition of membership that members at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable and respectful manner at meetings or in premises used by LIF. Any member may be excluded for breach of this condition, or for any other conduct contravening the objects of the LIF by a majority of those present and voting at any meeting. Any member so excluded shall have a right of appeal to the steering group.

b) At all meetings any offensive behaviour, inflammatory or discriminatory remarks, shall not be permitted and shall constitute a breach of this code of conduct.

6. The Steering Group:

a) The Steering Group shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to facilitate and coordinate the business of LIF.

b) The Steering Group shall consist of up to ten members from at least four different faiths.

c) The officers shall include a chair, two vice chairs, a secretary and treasurer and 5 elected members of the steering group.

d) The Steering Group shall meet at least three times a year.

e) Any member may attend a Steering Group meeting as an observer on making a request to do so to the Secretary, giving at least a week's notice.

f) Minutes of the Steering Group meetings shall be available to all members.

g) The Chairperson shall have a casting vote in the event of a split decision.

h) At each Annual General Meeting the Steering Group shall be elected for the following year. Existing Steering Group members may stand for re-election.

i) The Steering Group and/or its Chair shall have the power to establish sub groups to deal with specific tasks. Such sub-committees will automatically be dissolved once the task has been completed. The nature of such a sub-committee is that of a focused task group meeting on a regular basis until the issue is resolved.

7. General Meetings

- a) The Chairperson shall call at least three General Meetings of the LIF every year.
- b) The Secretary shall be deemed to have given adequate notice of a General Meeting by circulating by email or post no less than 7 days before the meeting a notice to every member community/congregation which had sent a representative to the General Meeting during the previous twelve months, and to any other congregation's leader who had expressed an interest in attending a meeting of the LIF.
- c) A General Meeting can make recommendations to the Steering Group, and can pass resolutions with a simple majority of members present and voting.

8. Annual General Meeting

- a) There shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) at which the Steering Group shall report back on its work, present a statement of accounts, and conduct elections in accordance with the constitution. The AGM can count as one of the minimum of three General Meetings
- b) The AGM shall also vote on recommendations put forward by the Steering Group by a simple majority of those present and voting except in the case of the constitution where changes will require a majority of 75% of those present and voting.
- c) Voting will be by a show of hands of the members present and if any decision is doubtful by ballot as determined by the Chair of the meeting.
- d) The Secretary shall be deemed to have given adequate notice of an AGM by circulating by email or post no less than 28 days before the AGM a notice to every member which had sent a representative to a meeting of the association during the previous twelve months.
- e) The AGM will elect the chair and up to a further 9 members of the steering group from at least four different faiths. Each nomination will require a seconder from the members of LIF. It is possible for individuals to nominate themselves.

9. Quorum

- a) The quorum for Steering Group meetings of the LIF shall be five from at least a minimum of two faith groups.
- b) The quorum for all Annual General Meetings and for all General Meetings shall be at least ten members from at least three faiths in the Forum.
- c) A meeting of less than a quorum may discuss and vote on the Agenda and put any recommendations to the next meeting at which there is a quorum.

10. Finance

- a) LIF may raise money in pursuit of its aims.
- b) All monies raised by or on behalf of LIF shall be applied to further the aims of LIF and for no other purpose.
- c) The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the finances of LIF and shall open a bank account in the name of the forum (LIF). Two signatures will be required for all withdrawals. All expenditure must be agreed at a committee meeting with the exception of items covered by any standing orders agreed by the committee.
- d) An independent person to be agreed by the Annual General Meeting shall review at least once a year a statement of receipts and payments and supporting documentation.

11. Dissolution:

If the Steering Group by a two-thirds majority should vote to decide at any time to dissolve the Forum, they shall give at least 28 days' notice of a Special General Meeting. The rules for calling a Special General Meeting are as for an Annual General Meeting.

If such a decision shall be confirmed by a 75% majority of those present and voting at the meeting, the Steering Group shall then dissolve LIF.

Any money or equipment remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given to a charity approved by the final General Meeting.