



Swindon Seniors Forum

A Voice for Swindon's Senior Citizens

Constitution

1. Name and Status

The Swindon Seniors Forum, hereafter referred to as "The Forum" is a democratic, independent, non party-political, non sectarian voluntary membership organisation for older people, welcoming participation regardless of ethnic origin, disability, faith, sex/gender or sexuality. [In this context 'older people' refers to those aged over 55.]

The Forum is run by a management committee elected from and by the membership.

2. Aim and Objectives

The Forum's aim is to promote the welfare and interests of older people within the Borough of Swindon, to combat ageism against and to promote a positive image of all older people.

In pursuit of this aim, The Forum seeks to:

- (a) provide an independent, inclusive forum for discussion and debate on the issues and concerns of older people within the Borough of Swindon;
- (b) provide opportunities for the exchange of information, ideas and experience, encouraging older people to have their say on issues that concern them and give them greater opportunity to influence decisions;
- (c) bring issues and concerns of older people to the notice of appropriate authorities, organisations, charities and other bodies;
- (d) provide the membership with opportunities to participate in associated social activities, whether arranged by The Forum or from invitation by other relevant organisations.

3. Powers

In furtherance of its Objectives, The Forum shall have the following powers to be executed by its management committee:

- (a) to maintain a membership system and to hold a list of members and their contact details for the sole purpose of facilitating communication and flow of information;
- (b) to bring together members with influential or other interested parties;
- (c) to affiliate to or liaise and work in partnership with local, regional and/or national organisations with similar aims and interests;
- (d) to maintain a website to publicise The Forum and its activities and to encourage feedback;
- (e) to seek funds and grants for its activities from appropriate sources;
- (f) to use funds for the hire of halls and for the purchase or hire of equipment appropriate to The Forum's meetings and activities;
- (g) to pay authorised expenses to management committee members and others as necessary for the execution of their duties;
- (h) to support or make donations to other organisations with similar aims or objectives.

4. Membership

Eligibility for membership of The Forum shall be irrespective of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality, or political, religious or other opinion, or any other characteristic which may be considered as minority or protected under equality legislation. There is no charge for membership.

Full membership, with voting rights, shall be open to any individual over fifty five (55) years of age and living within the Borough of Swindon. Associated (non-voting) membership is open to any person, group or organisation sharing the principles of The Forum and supporting its aims and objectives. Where the Forum requires additional help or expertise to carry out its functions, the management committee may at its discretion nominate a maximum of two people who do not fully meet the usual criteria to be deemed full members of the Forum and therefore eligible to join the committee and to become officers. Previous full members who have moved out of the Borough and therefore ceased to be eligible may also be considered for maintaining their status.

Membership may be refused or terminated by resolution of the management committee on the grounds that in their opinion such membership is harmful to other members of The Forum. The member/organisation will be notified in writing and given the opportunity to submit representations for consideration by the management committee prior to the resolution taking effect.

Any changes to the terms and conditions of membership of The Forum shall be subject to approval by the voting membership.

5. Member Meetings/Events

An Annual General Meeting (AGM), to provide appropriate reports to members and to elect the management committee, will normally be held in October each year.

An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) for a specific purpose may be convened by the management committee if deemed necessary or on written request by not less than ten full members.

Notice for an AGM or EGM shall be not less than 21 days and the quorum for official business shall be twenty full members or 20% of the total membership if greater.

Two or more open events will be held during the year within the Borough of Swindon, one of which may be combined with the AGM.

6. Management Committee

A management committee of up to ten full members of The Forum shall be elected at the AGM. Members of the committee who have served for five years or more shall make this known to the membership when seeking re-election. Should the committee be reduced to less than five and no suitable members can be recruited, The Forum may be dissolved according to the procedures set out below.

At its first meeting following the AGM the committee shall appoint a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and other officers as deemed necessary to carry out the business and activities of The Forum. In order to fill vacancies or to acquire additional expertise, the committee may co-opt a maximum of three additional members to serve on the committee until the next AGM, at which time they must seek election in the usual manner.

The quorum for management committee meetings shall be four members including at least one officer. It shall meet at least four times a year and voting decisions shall be by simple majority with the Chair having a casting vote. A committee member who fails to attend two consecutive meetings without giving an acceptable reason will be deemed to have resigned.

The committee may invite any member, associate member or other party to any meeting where their particular knowledge or experience may be useful.

Management committee members shall represent The Forum in a fair and democratic manner in line with an appropriate code of conduct.

7. Finance

The Forum's financial year shall run from 1 September to 31 August. A report on income and expenditure will be made at each AGM but may be made available to members on request seven days prior to the meeting.

No member shall be entitled to any commission, percentage, payment or inducement, or derive (directly or indirectly) any pecuniary benefit when undertaking business on behalf of The Forum. However, members who are asked to represent The Forum at meetings outside the Borough of Swindon may claim travel and incidental expenses.

8. Policies

The Forum's policies are available through The Forum website or on request to The Forum Secretary. These may include Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding and a Code of Conduct.

9. Complaints Procedure

The Forum's Complaints procedure, applying to Forum members and others attending Forum events, is set out in a separate document, copies of which are available through The Forum website or available on request from The Forum Secretary.

10. Dissolution of The Forum

Unless constitutionally required, a decision to dissolve The Forum may only be taken by a two-thirds majority vote at an AGM or EGM called for this purpose. Any Forum assets remaining after payment of outstanding debts shall be transferred to other such charitable organisations having similar aims or objectives.

11. Alterations to the Constitution

Alterations to the Constitution shall be subject to the approval of a majority of members voting at an AGM, or EGM called for this purpose, where 21 days notice of the proposed changes have been notified to all members of The Forum.

Adopted 2 October 2018 by Members present at SSF Annual General Meeting.
Amended 10 May 2022 by Members present at SSF Extraordinary General Meeting to add two sentences at end of second paragraph under Membership.