

MIDLOTHIAN FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS

CONSTITUTION

1. Name.

The name of the organisation shall be 'The Midlothian Federation of Community Councils'. (Hereinafter called the 'Federation').

2. Objectives.

The Objectives of the Federation shall be:

- a. To further the aims and interests of the Communities, by discussion and debate between representatives of members Community Councils in Midlothian.
- b. To encourage co-operation, shared learning and support amongst Community Councils within Midlothian.
- c. To foster a strong community spirit within Community Council areas in Midlothian and encourage the maintenance of the cultural identities of communities across Midlothian.
- d. To encourage the continuation of cultural activities and community events in Midlothian.

3. Role and Responsibilities.

The role of the Federation is to discuss and take such action in the interests of all Community Councils as it appears to be expedient and practicable. Action arising from the discussions and debate shall be subject to the agreement of a two-thirds majority of those representatives present at the meeting during which the matter was discussed.

4. Membership.

Membership of the Federation shall be open to each Community Council in Midlothian. Each Community Council shall be entitled to send two representatives to each meeting of the Federation. Such representatives may be any two members of the Community Council concerned.

5. Voting Rights.

All attendees at a meeting of the Federation shall have equal voting rights.

Other than for the election of office bearers, voting shall normally be by a show of hands, unless the Chair decides otherwise. In all votes, where there is a tie, the Chair shall have a casting vote.

6. Election of Office Bearers.

At the Annual General Meeting, the Federation shall elect from within its members a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary and any other such officers as it shall from time to time decide. Office Bearers will be elected for a period of 1 year, and may be re-elected thereafter. In the event that more than one person is nominated for a particular office, a ballot shall be held for that post.

7. Committees of the Federation.

From time to time, the Federation may form a sub-committee of the Federation to gather, collate and provide information to the Federation. Membership of such sub-committees will be determined by the Federation, and may include members of the Federation and co-opted persons of relevant experience. All deliberations of Federation sub-committees must be referred to the Federation for decision.

8. External Appointments.

From time to time, members of the Federation may be appointed as Federation Representatives to external bodies. These members are to represent the views of the Federation, and are to report on their representative roles to the Federation as appropriate and necessary.

9. Meetings of the Federation.

The Annual General Meeting of the Federation shall be held each year in November, where the Chairman shall deliver a report and Treasurer shall provide the Audited Account. Thereafter, the Federation shall meet throughout the year at intervals not exceeding three months. Dates of regular meetings during the year, the times of meetings, and the venue, shall be agreed at the Annual General Meeting.

The Federation may conduct virtual (on-line) meetings by means of a telephone conference, video conferencing facility or similar communications equipment - so long as all Community Council representatives participating in the meeting can hear each other; a Community Council representative participating in a meeting in this manner shall be deemed to be 'present' in person at the meeting.

For the avoidance of doubt, a vote given by an attendee participating in the meeting through any of these methods will be taken to be given personally. Hybrid (combined regular and virtual) meetings of the Federation shall be valid provided they are conducted in the same manner as meeting described above.

10. Quorum.

Representatives from at least 3 Community Councils shall form a quorum and shall be sufficient to hold a meeting of the Federation, during which members must adhere to the Standing Orders published as Annex A to this Constitution.

11. Minutes.

Minutes are to be taken of each meeting of the Federation, and a draft is to be circulated to the members of the Federation, to member Community Councils and to the Midlothian Council Liaison Officer, prior to the next meeting.

Minutes should be approved at the next meeting of the Community Council and a copy retained by the Midlothian Council Liaison Officer.

12. Guest Speakers.

The Chairman shall have the power to invite Councillors, Officials or others to Federation meetings to address the Federation on matters of policy or to discuss particular items of common interest.

13. Public Participation in the Work of the Federation.

All matters for discussion at the Federation should be channelled through the appropriate Community Council, and brought to the Federation by members of that Community Council. Members of the public shall therefore not normally be invited to address or petition the Federation on matters within its objectives. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair may invite members of the public to address the Federation on matters of Midlothian-wide interest or concern.

14. Liaison with Midlothian Council.

Midlothian Council has identified an official to act as a Liaison Officer with Community Councils and the MFCC. Unless there is a specific agreement, or an issue is a specific departmental issue, all correspondence between the Federation and Midlothian Council should, in the first instance, be directed through that Liaison Officer. The Federation must advise the Liaison Officer on the annual calendar of scheduled meetings, the AGM and give at least 10 working days' notice of any Special Meeting arranged by the Federation.

15. Control of Finance.

All monies held by the Federation, from whatever source, are solely to further the objectives of the Federation, and shall be held by an elected Treasurer on behalf of the Federation. The Treasurer is authorised to receive monies on behalf of the Federation, and when approved by the Federation, to disburse the money held.

All disbursement shall be by cheque or by Banker's Automated Clearing System (BACS). Payments by cheque must be signed by any two office-bearers who are authorised signatories of Midlothian Federation of Community Councils.

Authorised signatories may not be related to each other or co-habitees. BACS payments shall be made on the authorisation and recorded confirmation of two unrelated, not co-habitees and authorised office bearers. Receipts for expenditure must be obtained and held by the Treasurer. The Treasurer is to keep a written account and is to prepare and have the accounts independently examined for presentation and approval at the Annual General Meeting.

16. Title to Property.

The title to all property owned by the Federation shall be vested in the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, and their successors in such offices.

17. Alterations to the Constitution.

Any proposal to alter this constitution must be delivered in writing to the Secretary of the Federation not less than twenty-eight days before the date of the meeting at which it is first to be considered and such an alteration will require the support of the two thirds of members of the Federation present and voting at an Annual General Meeting or a special meeting convened to discuss the matter. Before such an amendment can be enacted, it must be submitted for approval by the Midlothian Council Liaison Officer.

18. Dissolution.

The Federation shall be dissolved when, following three consecutive meetings, it has not been able to form a Quorum, or at any time that a vote of two thirds of the Federation members present so decide. Further, Midlothian Council may dissolve the Federation when the terms of the Midlothian Council's Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils, Para 18, are not compliant.

MIDLOTHIAN FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS
STANDING ORDERS

These Standing Orders are adopted for use by the Midlothian Federation of Community Councils, (hereinafter called 'The Federation').

Meetings of the Federation.

- a. Regular meetings of the Federation shall be held at intervals of no more than three months, on a date and in a venue to be determined at the Annual General Meeting. An Annual General Meeting shall be held in November of each year. The meetings of any sub-committee of the Federation shall be as determined by the Federation when setting up the sub-committee.
- b. All meetings of the Federation shall be open to a maximum of two representatives from each Community Council within Midlothian.
- c. All matters for discussion must be raised by members of the appropriate Community Council. Members of the public shall not normally be invited to address the Federation on matters within its Objectives.
- d. Special Meetings of the Federation may be called at any time on the instructions of the Chairman of the Federation on the request of not less than five member Community Councils, to convene a special meeting for a particular matter or matters to be debated. A special meeting shall be held within 21 days of the receipt of the request, or as soon as practical thereafter.
- e. The notice of ordinary and Annual General Meetings of the Federation, featuring the date, time and venue, shall be provided to the Midlothian Council Liaison Officer by the Secretary of the Federation, at least 10 days before the date fixed for the meeting.

Minutes

- a. Minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of the Federation shall be drawn up within fourteen days from the date of that meeting, the draft of which is to be circulated to all members of the Federation, to member Community Councils and to the Midlothian Council Liaison Officer, prior to the next meeting.
- b. The minutes are to be discussed at the next Federation meeting and, following their approval by the Federation and retained for future reference.

Quorum.

A quorum of Representatives from 3 member Community Councils shall be sufficient to hold a meeting of the Federation.

Order of Business.

- a. The order of business for an ordinary meeting of the Federation shall be as follows:
 - Recording the membership present and apologies received
 - Visitor Matters – Address or presentation by an invited visitor.
 - The minutes of the last meeting shall be discussed and submitted for approval
 - Matters of correspondence received and sent shall be discussed
 - Any other item of business, which the Chairman has directed should be considered
 - Any other competent business
 - Questions from the floor
 - The date of the next meeting, after which the Chair should close the meeting

- b. The order of business for the Annual General Meeting shall be as follows:
 - Recording the membership present and apologies received
 - Chairman’s Annual Report and questions from the floor
 - Treasurer’s Submission of the Balance Sheet and Annual Accounts, duly independently examined and certified correct, and questions from the floor
 - Demit of current office bearers and election of office bearers.
 - The date of next Annual General Meeting, after which the Chair should close the meeting

- c. The order of business for a Special Meeting shall be as follows:
 - Recording the membership present and apologies received
 - Business for debate, as described in the calling notice for the special meeting
 - Chair to close the meeting.

Order of Debate

- a. The Chair shall decide all questions of order, relevancy and competency arising at meetings of the Federation and her/his ruling shall be final and shall not be

open to discussion. In particular, the Chair shall determine the order, relevancy and competency of all questions or topics at meetings of the Federation. The Chair in determining the order, relevance and competency of business and that questions have particular regard to the relevance of the issue to the community. He/she must ensure that the discussion and proceedings are conducted in such a manner that decisions are reached in a democratic manner. The Chair shall have the power, in the event of disorder arising at any meeting, to adjourn the Federation meeting to a time he/she may then, or afterwards, fix.

- b. Every motion or amendment shall be moved and seconded.
- c. After a mover of a motion has been called on by the Chair to reply, no other members shall speak to the question.
- d. A motion or amendment once made and seconded shall not be withdrawn without the consent of the mover and seconder thereof.
- e. A motion or amendment which is contrary to a previous decision of the Federation shall not be considered within six months of that decision.

Voting.

- a. Voting shall be taken by a show of hands of those present and eligible to vote, with the exception that, at an annual general meeting, the election of office bearers may be held by secret ballot.
- b. The Chair of a meeting of the Federation shall have a casting vote as well as a deliberative vote.

Alteration of Standing Orders.

Any proposal to alter these Standing Orders must be considered by the Federation and submitted to the Midlothian Council Liaison Officer for agreement. The local authority shall have final discretion on any proposed change.

Committees.

The Federation may appoint such committees as it may from time to time decide and shall determine their composition, terms of reference, duration, duties and powers.

Suspension of Standing Orders.

These Standing Orders shall not be suspended except at a meeting at which representatives of at least five Community Councils are present and then only if the mover states the object of his motion and if two-thirds of the Federation members present consent to such suspension.