**Waveney Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum**

**Constitution**

1 **NAME** The name will be Waveney Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum.

2. **THE AREA** The forum will serve the area of Waveney, Suffolk and surrounding areas as applicable

3. **OBJECT**

1) The relief of emotional distress and suffering and the preservation and protection of the mental and physical health of men, women, young people and children who have suffered or are exposed to domestic violence and abuse, by the provision of advice, information, training and classes and such other ways as shall be determined.

2) To advance the education of the public, organisations and agencies in all aspects of domestic violence and abuse including its impact on individuals and wider society.

ACTION: To actively support all those impacted by domestic abuse regardless of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age; to include adults who are now coming to terms with the impact of domestic/sexual abuse during their childhood.

ACTION: To allow all people who have suffered domestic violence and abuse the opportunity to attend groups specifically formulated for them. To provide information and support to those who require help, but are not yet ready to attend groups.

ACTION: To ensure an awareness of, and appropriate service provision where possible is delivered to those from ethnic minorities and marginalised groups who are affected by domestic abuse. To meet with other agencies on a regular basis to discuss the best ways to achieve this.

ACTION: To do our upmost to secure funding in order to provide tailored services to those impacted by domestic abuse within the community, especially when a gap in service is identified.

ACTION: To offer signposting, information, knowledge and advice to any organisation or individual requesting this. To support all to access services appropriate to their need in relation to domestic abuse. To ensure accessibility to our service.

ACTION: To ensure that all service delivery is shaped with the ‘voice of the victim’ held central to provision of that said service.

ACTION: To provide and create publicity materials and hold awareness raising events throughout the year to keep the issue of domestic abuse at the forefront of people’s minds.

ACTION: To provide a website and other forms of social media to disseminate information, advice and contact details as appropriate.

ACTION: To provide support, education and training to all organisations on the issues surrounding domestic abuse and its impact on families, the community and society, to include statutory, voluntary, social enterprises, clubs and others.

ACTION: To encourage and support healthy relationships in all age groups to include work specifically, but not solely, with children and young people.

ACTION: To enable and support those impacted by domestic abuse to report the crimes committed against them to the Police and/or other agencies as appropriate.

ACTION: To raise awareness and make available training to professionals on risk assessing, safety planning and referral procedures to the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub).

ACTION: To provide, where possible, a programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse in order that they may address the behaviour and attitudes and in so doing improve the lives of their families and the wider society.

ACTION: To meet bimonthly with Forum members to promote networking, good practice and partnership working to ensure that those impacted by domestic abuse are provided with the best service possible within Waveney and surrounding areas.

ACTION: To ensure that we adhere to our policies and procedures to include Equal Opportunities, Data Protection and the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults and Children.

**4 MEMBERSHIP**

Membership of the Forum shall be open to any organisation, agency or individual who works with, supports, refers, or in any way comes into contact with victims or survivors of domestic abuse in Waveney and surrounding areas.

It is also open under the same terms to those who engage with perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Membership is open to survivors of domestic abuse so long as they are deemed able to benefit from being a member, and are no longer in an abusive relationship. Survivors will be assessed for their suitability prior to joining.

The Forum shall hold a members' register that will provide information on the organisation, agency or individual. This register to be updated annually or on joining or leaving of a member.

**5 OFFICERS**

The Forum shall have a Chairman/woman, a Secretary and a Treasurer, elected annually by simple majority, at the annual general meeting, who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting. These positions shall be entirely honorary.

**6 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The executive committee shall consist of the Chairman /woman, Secretary and Treasurer. It will also consist of other representatives of the membership, to be nominated from amongst the forum members. They shall hold office until the next AGM after they have come into office, when they shall retire, but be eligible for re-appointment.

The Committee shall have the power to co-opt persons having special knowledge or experience, provided that the number of the co-opted members shall not exceed one-third of the total membership of the Committee. They shall hold office until the end of the Annual General Meeting following their co-option.

Voluntary and statutory organisations in membership may appoint deputies (without the power to vote) for their elected representatives who are unable to attend and particular meeting of the Committee.

The Committee may invite any person to attend its meetings as an observer but without the power to vote.

All honorary officers and Committee members shall retire annually and be eligible to stand for re-election.

**7 CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman/woman shall conduct a meeting or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair, if any. If neither is present, the persons present, shall, before any other business is transacted, appoint a Chairman/woman for the meeting.

**8 SECRETARY**

The Secretary shall conduct the correspondence of the Forum and will keep full and correct minutes of all proceedings of the Forum, which shall be produced at every meeting. The Secretary shall receive all complaints, which must be in writing and if unable to deal with them shall submit them to the executive committee at their next meeting.

**9 TREASURER**

The Treasurer shall keep all accounts of the Forum and shall lay before the Annual General Meeting a statement of the financial position of the Forum at the end of the month of October preceding, duly audited by the person appointed at the previous Annual General Meeting. The Treasurer shall maintain a bank account on behalf of the Forum at a bank approved by the Executive Committee.

**10 VICE CHAIR**

The Vice-chair acts for the Chair when the Chair is not available and undertakes assignments at the request of the Chair.

**11 MEETINGS**

• The Forum shall hold an Annual General Meeting in November*,* not more than fifteen months may elapse between successive annual general meetings

• The minimum periods of notice required to hold a general meeting of the charity are: (a) twenty-one clear days for an annual general meeting or a general meeting called for the passing of a special resolution; (b) fourteen clear days for all other general meetings.

• No business shall be transacted at any general meeting unless a quorum is present.

A quorum is: (a) four members present in person or by proxy and entitled to vote upon the business to be conducted at the meeting; or (b) one tenth of the total membership at the time whichever is the greater.

The authorised representative of a member organisation shall be counted in the quorum.

If: (a) a quorum is not present within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting; or (b) during a meeting a quorum ceases to be present; the meeting shall be adjourned to such time and place as the directors shall determine.

The trustees must reconvene the meeting and must give at least seven clear days’ notice of the reconvened meeting stating the date, time and place of the meeting.

If no quorum is present at the reconvened meeting within fifteen minutes of the time specified for the start of the meeting the members present in person or by proxy at that time shall constitute the quorum for that meeting.

• The Forum shall meet ten times or more per annum including the Annual General Meeting.

• A special general meeting can be called by the Executive Committee at any time, or by at least ten members who shall call for a special general meeting in writing.

• The Executive Committee shall meet prior to each Forum meeting in order to discuss any issues to be tabled at the Forum meeting not to include items to be tabled. Must inform the secretary a week before the meeting.

The Annual General Meeting shall be convened by the Executive Committee. Public notice of every Annual General Meeting shall be given at least twenty-one daysbefore the date thereof by displaying notice in some conspicuous part of the premises from time to time occupied by the Forum or other conspicuous place in the area of benefit.

The notice must specify the date time and place of the meeting and the general nature of the business to be transacted. If the meeting is to be an annual general meeting, the notice must say so. The notice must also contain a statement setting out the right of members to appoint a proxy under section 324 of the Companies Act 2006 and article 22

The notice must be given to all the members and to the trustees.

The proceedings at a meeting shall not be invalidated because a person who was entitled to receive notice of the meeting did not receive it because of an accidental omission by the charity.

The Executive Committee shall present to each Annual General Meeting the reports and accounts of the Forum for the preceding year.

Sub Committees: The Committee may from time to time appoint such sub-committees as may be deemed necessary, and may determine their terms of reference, duration and composition, provided that

a) No sub-committee may be given power to co-opt more than one-fourth of its total membership

b) Each sub-committee shall furnish the committee with a full copy of the minutes of each meeting of the sub-committee within seven days thereof

c) The majority of the members of any sub-committee shall be drawn from the main committee and for voting purposes at the sub-committee meetings the majority of the quorum shall be committee members.

**12 VOTING**

a) Every matter (except as in this constitution provided) be determined by the majority of the members present and voting by hand on the question. In case of equality of votes the Chairman / woman of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote

b) The minimum number of voting members should not be less than one third of the Committee

Written resolutions - A resolution in writing agreed by a simple majority (or in the case of a special resolution by a majority of not less than 75%) of the members who would have been entitled to vote upon it had it been proposed at a general meeting shall be effective provided that: (a) a copy of the proposed resolution has been sent to every eligible member by post or email; (b) a simple majority (or in the case of a special resolution a majority of not less than 75%) of members has signified its agreement to the resolution by post or email; and (c) it is contained in an authenticated document which has been received at the registered office within the period of 28 days beginning with the circulation date.

A resolution in writing may comprise several copies to which one or more members have signified their agreement.

In the case of a member that is an organisation, its authorised representative may signify its agreement.

**13 CRIMINAL RECORDS**

When appropriate the Forum shall adopt a policy for working with vulnerable adults and children. When using individuals in such situations the Forum shall reserve the right to seek voluntary checks from the Criminal Record Bureau.

**14 FUND RAISING**

To raise funds to finance specific activities of the Forum which involves application for grants shall be made through such charitable organisations or statutory bodies as may be approved by the Executive Committee.

**15 ALTERATIONS**

Alterations to this constitution may be approved by a resolution of not less than 2/3 of members present and voting at a meeting.

The Forum may be on resolution passed in accordance with paragraph 11.

**16 SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Committee may call Special General Meetings whenever they think fit, and all the provisions regarding Annual General Meetings apply. When a Special General Meeting is convened for the purpose of dissolution and changes would be necessary then the following clause would be applicable.

**17 DISSOLUTION**

The Forum may at any time be dissolved by a resolution passed by two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a Special General Meeting convened for that purpose of which not less than twenty-one days’ notice shall have been given to all members of the committee and duly published in the area of benefit. The property and assets of the Forum shall not be paid to, or distributed among the members of the committee but shall be applied to such other charitable institutions having objects similar to those specified in clause 3 thereof as the Forum may with approval of the Charity Commissioners or other authority having charitable jurisdiction determine.

**18 RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Within the limits prescribed within this Constitution the Committee may from time to time make and alter rules for the conduct of their business and for the summoning and conduct of their meetings or of Annual and General Meetings, the deposit of money at a proper bank, the custody of documents and in particular with reference to:-

a) The appointment as Secretary of one of themselves without remuneration as the Forum may determine.

b) The appointment as Treasurer of one of themselves without remuneration as the Forum may determine.

c) The engagement and dismissal of such paid officers and servants of the Forum may consider necessary.

d) The number of members who shall form a quorum at meetings of the Committee and General Meetings.

**19 POWER OF AMENDMENT**

1) The Forum may amend any provision contained in this constitution provided that:

a) No amendment may be made that would have the effect of making the Forum cease to be a Charity at law.

b) No amendment may be made to alter the object if the change would undermine or work against the previous objects of the Forum

c) No amendment may be made to the objects and dissolution clauses or this clause without the prior written consent of the Commission.

d) Any resolution to amend a provision of this constitution is passed by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting at a general meeting.

2) A copy of any resolution amending this constitution shall be sent to the Commission within twenty one days of it being passed.

**20 INTERPRETATION**

The interpretation Act 1889 applies for the interpretation of this Constitution as it applies for the interpretation of an Act of Parliament.

AMENDED DATE

CHAIRPERSON TREASURER/SECRETARY