

Cornwall Ancient Tree Forum

Constitution

Name

The Name of the Forum shall be the "Cornwall Ancient Tree Forum", hereafter called "the Forum".

Scope

The Forum's main activities shall relate to Ancient and Veteran trees in Cornwall.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Forum shall be:

- To promote the celebration, conservation, knowledge and management of ancient and veteran trees in Cornwall.

The specific objectives of the Forum shall be:

1. To assess the true scale and condition of the resource in Cornwall and to disseminate this information widely.
2. To identify centres or examples of best practice for the management of Ancient and Veteran trees in Cornwall.
3. To develop, evaluate and disseminate information about innovative and successful approaches to the management of Ancient and Veteran trees.
4. To prevent the further loss of Ancient and Veteran trees through education, training, political lobbying and dissemination of good practice.
5. To work in partnership with the National and other local Ancient Tree Forums or any other group or organisation in furtherance of the above aims and objectives.

Membership

The Forum will have a membership which is based on the range of organisations, agencies, local authorities businesses and individuals with an interest or involvement in issues relating to Ancient and Veteran Trees. Members may include both organisational representatives and individuals with a personal interest in Ancient and Veteran Trees issues. Membership will be at the application to the Management Board, or, on the recommendation of the Chair, by invitation. All members must agree to abide by this Constitution and seek to further the aim of the Forum. Members may be invited by the Chairman to stand down should they be unable to contribute to the work of the Forum. Membership will be free.

Meetings

There will (*normally*) be at least two ordinary meetings of the Forum each year. Extra-ordinary meetings to address specific issues may be called by the Chairman or if 6 or more members request such a meeting. The autumn meeting shall be the Annual General Meeting to receive accounts (*if applicable*) and to elect officers and members to the Management Board. The agenda or programme for meetings shall be drawn up by the Chairman, taking account of any items requested by members of the Forum. The Chairman may ask another member of the Forum to convene and chair/lead a meeting if he/she is unable to be present. Non-member individuals or organisations may be invited to attend meetings for specific purposes. Minutes of meetings shall be kept (but not necessarily taken) by the Chairman, and passed on to successive chairmen.

Sub-Groups

The Forum may set up Sub-Groups to address issues and carry out functions required to meet the forums objectives. The Management Board shall agree on the Chairman for any such Sub-Group. Sub-Groups will report to the Management Board at regular intervals and shall seek approval from the Management Board (or, in an emergency, its Chairman) before taking any action that it has not been asked to pursue by the Management Board. Not all members of any Sub-Group need be members of the Forum. No meeting of any Sub-Group shall be quorate unless at least two members of the Management Board are present and no decision or resolution may be made without those members' agreement.

Decisions

Decisions of any meeting will be by consensus or a simple majority of the members present. No member shall have the right of veto.

Management Board

A Management Board (hereafter called 'the Board'), shall be appointed annually at the Annual General Meeting from within the full membership of the Forum and shall comprise a minimum of 3 members and the Chairman and the Chairmen of all sub groups. The Board shall be responsible for the main decision making on behalf of the Forum and for the day to day business and management of any funds held. The Management Board has the power to co-opt new members should any Board members withdraw to ensure full representation.

Officers

The Forum will elect a Chairman on an annual basis at its Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting, who will be expected to serve in this position for a minimum of one and a maximum of four consecutive years. A quorum of 10 members is required for this. Should there be more than one nomination for Chair, voting will be by secret ballot at the meeting.

The Forum may appoint a Vice-Chairman, Treasurer or Secretary if the majority of members present at a meeting agree to do so. Election to these posts will follow the same procedure as for the chair. Positions may be filled by the Board on a temporary basis and ratified at the next Forum meeting.

The Forum may be served by one or more officers employed to further its aims. The Forum itself shall not, however, act as employer but, rather, one of its member organisations shall be the employer subject to the development of an employment agreement. Any person employed under the auspices of the Forum shall report regularly to the Forum and the Management Board may act as their Steering Group.

The Forum, or its representative organisations with the agreement of the Forum, may appoint consultants or contractors to progress individual work areas or projects on its behalf.

Finance

The Forum or Board may receive money and hold a bank account. No withdrawals may be made from the account without the signature of at least two authorised members. These two members shall be from among three members, one of whom must be the Chairman or Vice Chairman, authorised by the Board at one of its meetings. The Chairman shall ensure that accounts are kept, and shall make these available to members on request. The Forum may seek sources of finance for projects or posts from external sources, including charitable trusts and sponsors, as well as from among its own members.

Alternatively monies may be held by a member organisation on behalf of the Forum and agreed by the Forum or Board subject to the development of an accountable body / budget holder agreement.

The property and funds of the Forum must be used only for promoting the Objectives and do not belong to the members of the Forum or Board.

Alteration of the Constitution

Any proposed alteration to this Constitution must be discussed as an agenda item at a meeting of the Forum, with a quorum of at least 10 members, and may be agreed only if it has the approval of the majority of members present. The constitution will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Notice of meetings

Dates for full and extraordinary meetings shall be confirmed by giving not less than 10 days notice, in writing, by fax, phone or email, along with notice of any substantive agenda items relating to election of officers or alteration of the constitution.

Commercial Interests

All members must declare any commercial interests they may have in any item for discussion at any meeting. The Chairman of that meeting shall decide whether it is appropriate for that member to participate in that part of the meeting and can ask the member to leave the meeting for that item. These actions shall be minuted.

Affiliation

The Forum shall seek affiliation with the national Ancient Tree Forum.

Dissolution

If the Board decides for whatever reason that it would be advisable for the Forum to dissolve, this shall be discussed at a meeting of the Forum after full consultation with the membership. At least 21 days notice must be given for this meeting. The Board will decide how to ensure the views of the membership can best be sought. The resolution to dissolve the Forum must be approved by at least two thirds of the membership present at the meeting. The Board will have the power to decide whether or not to accept proxy or postal votes.

On dissolution any funds remaining shall as far as possible be returned to their sources or, where such sources no longer exist or cannot be identified, to an appropriate successor body or other charitable organisation approved by the Board, in furtherance of the aims of the Forum.

Agreed at a meeting of the Forum on

Signed:..... (Chairman)

DRAFT FOR ADOPTION