

CONSTITUTION

Spitalfields Community Group (SCG)

1. NAME

The Group shall be known as “Spitalfields Community Group” *hereinafter* referred to as “the Group”.

2. AIM

The aim of the Group is to promote and protect the rights and amenities of those who live or work in Spitalfields and/or own property in Spitalfields.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Group shall be to:

- a) capture the commitment, support and enthusiasm within our community to enhance the quality of living in Spitalfields;
- b) represent and connect different geographic and demographic areas of Spitalfields
- c) be socially cohesive, and bring the community together in a spirit of mutual co-operation
- d) create a united, energetic and equitable front, within our group, to the agencies that influence and take decisions that relate to life in Spitalfields;
- e) encourage and monitor any initiatives to improve local amenities and facilities within Spitalfields;
- f) represent the interests of local residents in consultation with relevant bodies and authorities;
- g) provide real benefits to members of the Group;
- h) do all such other things as in the opinion of the Committee may further the above objectives

and in summary, to be **representative, cohesive, collegiate, approachable, transparent and accountable.**

The SCG recognises that opinions on architectural merit tend to be personal and diverse. Consequently the SCG will not normally involve itself in Planning and/or Conservation matters unless:

- i) there is overwhelming evidence that a significant majority of SCG members would be impacted by a particular matter (eg: planning applications for night-clubs and/or off-licences), and or:
- j) the particular matter impacts a Group priority identified by the annual survey.

However, the Group will keep Members informed of such matters, so that individual Members – should they so wish – may become involved as individuals.

In case of contentious issues, doubt or uncertainty the final decision on whether the SCG will be involved as a Group will be taken by the SCG Committee.

4. Annual Survey of Members and SCG Procedures

To help ensure the Group is indeed representative and accountable, the Group will conduct an annual survey of all its members. At the annual AGM (normally held each summer) copies of the previous annual survey will be discussed, and members will be invited to suggest what issues (if any) should be added for the next survey. This next survey (normally held each autumn) will be analysed to determine the then current priorities of the Group's members. On completion of this analysis:

- a) The analysed results will be published to the membership, and:
- b) The priorities of the SCG for the following twelve months will be set accordingly based on the survey results.

In addition the SCG Committee will maintain and publish a document of "SCG Policies and Procedures" to ensure that all members understand the procedures that the SCG Committee and SCG Members are expected to follow to ensure that the good reputation of the SCG is maintained. This document will be updated as and when required by the Committee, and will also be updated where appropriate to include any appropriate feedback from the annual survey of Members.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- a) Membership shall be open, irrespective of nationality, race, colour, sex, political or religious beliefs (as long as they support the aims and objectives as stated above) to all who live or work in Spitalfields and/or own property in Spitalfields, or who have an interest in the aims of the Group.
- b) Membership of the Group shall be open to anyone as defined in para "a" above, and shall also be open to anyone who is interested in the aims of the Group and who is proposed and seconded by two existing members and elected by a majority of those present and voting at either a Committee Meeting or at a General meeting of the Group.
- c) Anyone who lives or works in Spitalfields and/or owns property in Spitalfields, or who has an interest in the aims of the Group can register by notifying a member of the Committee and is henceforth defined as a member.
- d) It shall be a condition of membership that members at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner at meetings or in premises used by the Group, and at all times uphold the objectives and reputation of the Group. Any member can be excluded or expelled for:
 - a. breach of this condition
 - b. conduct contravening the objectives of the Group
 - c. injuring the reputation of the Group
 - d. disruption and/or undermining the activities of the Groupby a majority of those present and voting at any Committee or General Meeting. Any member so excluded shall have the right of appeal at the following General Meeting.
- e) The Group shall be non-party political.

6. MEMBERS: POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

- a) All members on joining the Group must declare any potential conflicts of interests with the Objectives of the SCG. Such potential conflicts might be commercial or financial (eg: property development, retail sales, et al) or might arise from membership of other bodies.
- b) At any meeting where a member has a potential conflict of interest with the subject under discussion, the member must declare that interest and may be requested not to attend the meeting during that discussion.
- c) Members with potential conflicts of interests may not stand for election to the committee. The committee reserves the right to exclude any member from standing for election to the committee if that member is perceived by the committee to have potential conflicts of interest with the Objectives of the SCG.

Working with other Local Community Groups

- d) The prime aim of the SCG is to work on behalf of its members to achieve the aims desired by SCG members – aims as demonstrated and recorded by occasional surveys of the SCG membership.
- e) The SCG recognises that from time to time the aims of the membership will coincide with activities of other local community groups. When such instances arise (eg: tackling issues of ASB, drug use, alcohol licensing) the SCG will work closely with any other local group(s) campaigning on such issues of common concern.

7. FINANCE

The Group shall keep proper accounts of all income and expenditure. The Treasurer may open a bank account in the name of the Group. All cheques issued in the name of the Group shall be signed by the Treasurer and one other nominated Officer or Committee Member.

8. SUBSCRIPTIONS/FINANCES

- a) The Annual General Meeting shall ratify what subscriptions (if any) shall be paid by members. The method of collection and the amount will be set by the Committee and agreed at a General Meeting. In the event of subscriptions being levied, only paid up members can vote at meetings.
- b) any subscriptions or other monies raised by or on behalf of the Group shall only be applied in furtherance of the objectives of the Group.

9. AFFILIATIONS

The Group shall have the power to affiliate to any organisation providing it is of direct benefit to the Group.

10. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

- a) Notice of meetings (where required) shall be advertised by a method approved by the Committee and shall include the date, time and place of the meeting and agenda of matters to be discussed.
- b) Notices for the AGM shall include the proposed agenda. The Notice will also state whether the officers/committee members are ready to stand again for election, and will explain that other members are entitled to stand for election to any post on the committee.

11. MEETINGS

Meetings:

The decisions of General Meetings of the Group shall be binding on the Committee. All decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of full members present and entitled to vote. No person shall exercise more than one vote, notwithstanding that they may have been appointed to represent two or more interests. In the event of the Group charging an annual subscription, only paid up members shall be entitled to vote. In the case of equality of votes, the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote. The quorum for General Meetings shall be not less than ten members.

Annual General Meetings:

The Committee shall call an Annual General Meeting of the Group each year and within 15 months of the last AGM, advertised as in paragraph 8. Not less than 14 days' notice shall be given.

At this meeting:

- a) the Committee shall give an Annual Report of the Group;
- b) the Committee shall give accounts of the Group for the previous year;
- c) the members of the Committee for the next year shall be elected;
- d) any proposals submitted to the Secretary in writing, not less than seven days in advance of the meeting, shall be discussed;
- e) emergency items/business can be discussed by a majority decision of those present and voting at the AGM.

(The removal of Officers/Committee Members may generally only be carried out at the Annual General Meeting. However, where the need arises this may be done by the Committee and must then be ratified at the next SGM or AGM).

Special General Meetings:

The Secretary shall call a Special General Meeting at the request of a majority of the Committee, or on receipt of a written petition by no less than 10 members of the Group giving reasons for their request. The Secretary shall give not less than 14 days' notice of the holding of a Special General Meeting to all members, which shall take place within 28 days of the receipt of the request or petition.

Social Meetings:

The Group will aim to hold a meeting open to all members once every 3 months, to include:

- a) an update on the Group's activities
- b) a speaker on a topic of local interest
- c) an opportunity for members to meet socially.

12. COMMITTEE MEMBERS/OFFICERS

- a) The Committee shall conduct the business of the Group. The Committee shall have up to twelve members in total who should represent the various geographic areas of Spitalfields.
- b) The Committee will normally include the following officers: a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Treasurer, Environment Officer and a Film Officer.
- c) At the discretion of the Committee an individual committee member may hold more than one of the above posts
- d) The Committee can at its discretion create special roles for Committee Members.
- e) The Committee can at its discretion co-opt up to two additional Committee Members if the Committee feels that would be in the interests of the SCG
- f) The Committee members shall be elected annually (as per section 13 below), and the Committee members shall then at the next Committee Meeting elect and/or confirm the individual post holders from within the Committee members.

13. RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICERS

The Chairperson

- shall normally call and conduct the meetings of the Group. The Chairperson will normally lead the representation of the Group members to all external bodies. The Chairperson will ensure that the Group maintains an up-to-date record of the priority issues of the members, and will also ensure that appropriate sub-committees are set up to tackle such issues.

The Chairperson may delegate any such responsibilities to other members of the Committee or members of the Group as appropriate.

The Deputy Chairperson

- shall deputise for the Chairperson when the Chairperson is not available, and/or undertake specific responsibilities as assigned by the Chairperson. He/she will also be responsible for external liaison to bodies and organisations outside of the SCG. The Deputy Chairperson will also take over from the Chairperson in any discussions where the Chairperson may have a conflict of interest on the subject under discussion.

The Treasurer

- shall keep proper accounts of income and expenditure and report on them or deliver them up as required by the Committee or the Residents' meeting. Such accounts shall be audited by a qualified accountant or another member appointed by the Committee and ratified by the membership at the subsequent Annual General Meeting.
- shall also be responsible for maintaining the records and contact details of members of the Group.

The Environment Officer

- shall be responsible for co-ordinating the Group's activities regarding the physical environment of the neighbourhood, including such matters as planning and licensing applications, police matters, noise and ASB.

The Film Officer

- shall be responsible for liaising on behalf of the SCG with the LBTH Film Office, and shall represent SCG members' interests both with that office, and where necessary directly with parties carrying out filming and members affected by filming activities.

14. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(a) the Committee shall aim to meet monthly (bar August) but in any case will meet as necessary and not less than four times a year. The quorum for Committee meetings shall be five members of whom at least two must be officers.

(b) the Committee may temporarily fill any vacancy arising among the Officers of the Group from its other members and may also co-opt members to the Committee if required subject to ratification by the next General Meeting of members.

15. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- a) Committee Members shall be elected annually at the Group's AGM
- b) Any paid up member of the SCG shall be eligible to stand for election who has for at least the previous twelve months:
 - paid their subscription (if and as appropriate at the time)
 - actively participated (in the opinion of the Committee) in SCG meetings and activities

- c) Subject to paragraph (c) below, if no alternative members have been proposed for any vacancy/vacancies the committee may be re-elected “en bloc” at the AGM if that be the will of the members present
- d) When any committee member has served for a continuous period of three years since their last election, he/she/they must specifically stand for re-election at that year’s AGM. The committee post(s) that they hold must be advertised as due for re-election in the Notice of that AGM. This Notice shall give details of the post(s), state whether the existing member(s) is/are standing again for election, and invite alternative nominations to the committee should any other member(s) wish to stand for election.

16. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Any proposal to alter this constitution must be submitted to the Secretary of the Group not less than 28 days before the Annual General Meeting at which it is to be discussed. To be valid, the signatures of at least ten members must support such a proposal. Not less than 14 days notice shall be given of such a meeting, together with the wording of any proposed alteration. Any such alteration shall require approval of a majority of those present and voting at the meeting.

17. DISSOLUTION

(a) If the Committee decides (or if a Committee no longer exists then if any five members of the Group decide) that the Group should be dissolved, they shall give notice, advertised as per *Section 8*, of a meeting at which the matter shall be discussed. For the sole purpose of dissolution a quorum need not apply, and the Group may be dissolved by a two-thirds majority of those present.

(b) The assets, financial and otherwise, remaining when the Group has satisfied its liabilities, shall be applied for such purposes ancillary to the objectives, as the meeting shall decide.

SCG Policies and Procedures

1) Planning Applications

Planning applications within the ward will be put on the SCG website to provide Members with information should they wish to respond as individuals.

The SCG does not take a position on planning applications unless:

- they have a licensing component, and/or:
- there is overwhelming evidence that a significant majority of SCG members would be impacted by the application, and or:
- they impact a Group priority identified by the annual survey of SCG Members.

In the event of a Planning Application where the SCG decides to be involved as a Group, the SCG will normally:

- consult with other bodies eg: The Spitalfields Trust, and other such bodies
- if appropriate set up a forum with other bodies to examine the issues, eg: with other residents' groups
- invite the applicant/ developer to present their case
- invite any other relevant bodies to present their case
- ballot members to elicit opinion

Any final decision on adopting such an issue, must be ratified by the SCG Committee after all appropriate steps (such as above) have been taken.

2) Committee Decisions

Where decision making is required in any forum of the SCG, eg: AGMs, Committee Meetings, Sub-Group Meetings, et al, the following procedures will apply:

- in the event of a split within the Committee, the chair to have the casting vote
- having arrived at a decision, the Committee will assume the position of "collective cabinet responsibility"
- on all contentious issues, Members will be provided with a summary of both sides of the debate

3) SCG "Sub-Groups"

- At least one Committee member will participate fully in any "sub-group" set up within the SCG
- The sub-group will feed back all significant ongoing developments to the SCG Committee and will provide regular updates to the SCG Committee at stipulated intervals
- All external contacts/meetings must be notified to the SCG Committee with sufficient notice, if possible, to enable a member of the SCG Committee to participate

4) The "Voice" of the SCG

No SCG Member may use the name of the SCG, or claim to speak on behalf of the SCG, without the prior documented authorisation of an Officer of the SCG Committee.