

The Forum Constitution

The Constitution of the St James's, Westminster Neighbourhood Forum

1. The St James's Neighbourhood Forum in Westminster has been established by key stakeholders and individuals in the St James's Ward of the City of Westminster for the purpose of promoting and improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area [having regard to the need to conserve and enhance its unique heritage]. The Forum will consider the possibility of meeting these objectives through the preparation and implementation of a Neighbourhood Plan.
2. The Forum shall exist for 5 years from its formal designation by the City of Westminster and at its AGM at the end of year 4 (2016) the AGM will give consideration to a continuing or successor organisation to maintain and monitor the St James's Neighbourhood Plan.
3. The Forum's ultimate authority comes from its Annual General Meeting but it may delegate all or part of that authority to a Steering Group.
 - a) The AGM, and any other public meetings held, will elect the members on and confer the powers of the Forum (as defined in 5e) and the plans they or Forum task or working groups may develop.
 - b) If there is more than one public meeting in any one year, one (in May or June) will be designated as the AGM.
 - c) The AGM will be called with at least 15 working days' notice, once per year, by giving notice to all relevant persons in the Neighbourhood Area by written communication to the last known communication address.
 - d) The AGM has the power to elect and remove by a vote of no confidence, any member of the Steering Group.
 - e) At each AGM the Chairman will provide a written report, the Treasurer will provide a set of accounts for the previous year and the Minute secretary will record the proceedings and also the proceedings of the Steering Group.

4. Forum Membership

- a) Forum membership is open to all residents of the St James's Neighbourhood Area. Individuals can sign up as members at any Forum public meetings or by contacting the Forum via its website or any Steering Group member.
- b) Individuals running businesses or working in St James's with an interest in St James's can become Associate Members of the Forum, can attend meetings, including the AGM, can volunteer for the Forum and receive Forum meetings but cannot vote at the AGM.
- c) Membership is open to all elected local authority councillors whose Ward or Cabinet nomination includes the St James's Neighbourhood Area or issues.
- d) Members may be contacted by the Steering Group from time to time to act as a litmus test for ideas and proposals or to be invited to participate in other activities related to the work of the Forum.

- e) If the Membership of the Forum should fall below the minimum of 21 individuals, the Membership Secretary should inform the Chairman, in order to take such steps to raise membership back to the minimum number.

5. Forum Steering Group

- a) The Steering Group (SG) exists to co-ordinate and implement the work of the Forum and will prioritise and schedule such work including, if thought appropriate, developing a Neighbourhood Plan for St James's. The Steering Group is responsible for giving publicity to the work of the Forum.
- b) The SG is a working committee made up from Forum members elected at the AGM, all of whom have a vote.
- c) Non-voting SG members with specialist skills may be co-opted onto the SG and the SG may set up Task or Working Groups of Forum members for specific projects or tasks to be undertaken.
- d) The SG will liaise with the relevant bodies such as landowners, business associations, the local authority and the elected representatives for St James's Ward.
- e) Steering Group Members to be elected at the AGM, are: Chairman, Treasurer, Minute Secretary and Membership Secretary plus 2 other members.
- f) SG decision making can be by consensus or after a vote – the Chairman will have the casting vote.
- g) The SG has the power to remove any member by majority vote but if more than one such removal occurs in any year, a General Meeting of the Forum must be called within 6 weeks.
- h) Membership of the Forum Steering Group is open to Members and Associate Members and should be nominated by a Member or Associate Member.
- i) Representatives of Residents' groups and organisations on the SG are responsible for communicating between the Forum and their group/association.
- j) The Steering Group will receive and consider reports from relevant project groups and panels.

6. Forum Funding

The Forum can raise funds for its activities by one or more of the following methods:

- a) Charging membership fees on an individual and/or associate member basis – level of fees to be agreed at an AGM or extraordinary general meeting.
- b) Submitting applications to grant awarding bodies for appropriate funds.
- c) Working in partnership with organisations which have funds to spend in the St James's Ward.
- d) By other means in keeping with the role of the Forum, including revenue from the website, donations, and proceeds from events.