

SOLIHULL FAITHS' FORUM

CONSTITUTION

1. PURPOSE

The Solihull Faiths' Forum exists to bring together faith groups who are interested in fostering greater mutual understanding and friendship. The group seeks to promote greater understanding and appreciation amongst local people of the rich diversity of belief and practise within our own community and beyond.

2. AIMS:

- 2.1 To live peacefully together.
- 2.2 To involve faith and cultural groups in the civic and public life of the borough.
- 2.3 To enable the Council, Solihull Partnership and local faith groups to discuss matters of mutual concern or interest.

3. LEGAL STATUS

The Faiths Forum is:

- 3.1 an unincorporated association not able to hold contracts or trade;
- 3.2 a non-statutory and non-executive body.

4. POWERS

- 4.1 To authorise a plan of activities.
- 4.2 To appoint a Steering group
- 4.3 To seek to have a single voice on issues of mutual concern.
- 4.4 To receive an annual report on activities at this Forum's AGM.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOLIHULL FAITHS' FORUM

- 5.1 Membership shall be open to any faith community based in the borough, or, if located outside the borough, with significant representation (10 or more people) from within the local community.
- 5.2 Faith communities will nominate one voting representative.
- 5.3 Other individuals may attend Forum meetings as observers

- 5.4 There is no limit on the size of overall membership; a register of members shall be maintained and updated (if required) at every meeting (this register will be kept by SMBC acting as Forum secretariat)
- 5.5 Forum Members are entitled to join and resign at any time. There will be no requirement to pay subscriptions.
- 5.6 Each member shall appoint one individual person to attend and vote; though they may appoint a deputy at any time.
- 5.7 The Forum shall at each AGM nominate representatives of the 7 faiths (listed in Annex "A" to the constitution) to act as members of the Steering Group. The Forum will also nominate up to 5 additional Steering Group members. If more than 5 nominations are received the Forum will hold a vote.

6. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF FORUM MEMBERS

All members:

- 6.1 are required to be a signatory to and abide by this constitution (any member not complying with this constitution, will be excluded)
- 6.2 respect the views and opinions of other members and behave courteously at meetings
- 6.3 are required to attend at least one meeting each year.
- 6.4 have the right to speak at meetings and vote.

7. ROLE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE SFF STEERING GROUP

The Group shall:

- 7.1 Comprise nominated representatives from seven faiths, with five additional places to be appointed by the Forum (see Appendix A);
- 7.2 Appoint a Chairman and Vice-Chairman who will also act as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Forum, who will be expected to serve until the following AGM.
- 7.3 Steering Group members, other than the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, may nominate one deputy to attend on their behalf.
- 7.4 Uphold this constitution and speak with a single voice;
- 7.5 Manage the business of the Forum, and agree the agenda for meetings at least 7 days in advance;
- 7.6 Prepare an annual plan of activities and prepare an annual report for the AGM;

- 7.7 Produce a calendar of meetings for the year ahead;
- 7.8 Agree an agenda for Forum meetings;
- 7.9 Ensure that its minutes are circulated to the wider Forum and publish on any website; and
- 7.10 Co-opt advisers to assist its work but they shall not have any voting rights.

8. ROLE OF SOLIHULL COUNCIL

The Council shall:

- 8.1 Convene meetings of and provide a secretariat for the Forum and Steering Group.
- 8.2 Provide and manage a small budget to support the work of the Forum acting as an Accountable Body.
- 8.3 Keep a record of expenditure relating to Forum activity.
- 8.4 Provide legal and other advice (eg for meetings, events, media relations, etc).
- 8.5 Support project work on an agreed basis.

9. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PARTNERSHIPS

The SFF shall determine the links it wishes to have with other partnerships, including The Solihull Partnership.

10. SPONSORSHIP OF FAITHS' FORUM ACTIVITIES

- 10.1 The Steering Group may sponsor activities with the endorsement of the wider Forum.
- 10.2 This will take the form of an Action Plan, which may be updated annually.
- 10.3 Activities can be indemnified by the Council subject to risk assessment by SMBC (see 1.14)

11. RULES OF PROCEDURE AT MEETINGS

- 11.1 The Forum shall meet at least two times / calendar year. One of these meetings will be an Annual General Meeting at which a Steering Group (see 1.7) and Officers shall be appointed.
- 11.2 The Steering Group shall meet at least 3 times a year

- 11.3 Quorum for the Forum shall be one third of the official membership as agreed at the last meeting
- 11.4 Quorum for the Steering Group shall be 7 out of the 12 members
- 11.5 The AGM to be held in each calendar year – no later than 15 months after the first general meeting.
- 11.6 Chairman may at any time call a special meeting provided that at least 14 days notice is given and is supported by three Forum members
- 11.7 Notice of meetings will be sent to Forum members at least 14 days in advance
- 11.8 All members have the right to speak at meetings and vote.
- 11.9 Voting will be on the basis of one faith community one vote.
- 11.10 The Chairman has the casting vote if there is an equal split following a vote.
- 11.11 Meetings shall be open to the public unless the Forum agrees, by consensus, to hold meetings or parts of meetings in private.

12. FINANCE

- 12.1 The Forum does not hold any separate bank account.
- 12.2 The Forum as currently constituted would not be able to enter into contracts.
- 12.3 There will be a budget to support activities (e.g. cost of room hire), held by SMBC, on behalf on the Forum. A report on eligible expenditure will be taken to each Forum AGM. Expenditure must be on Forum related activity.
- 12.4 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman may authorise the payment in good faith of reasonable and proper remuneration and expenses to any Forum member or Officer (e.g. travel).
- 12.5 The Chairman shall record in the minutes of a meeting any declaration of pecuniary interest.
- 12.6 Expenditure will be subject to the Council's internal and external audit procedures.

13. INDEMNITY

- 13.1 SMBC where necessary will provide third party insurance for Faiths' Forum activities as expressed in the Action Plan and which has been subject to risk assessment (set out in 1.10)
- 13.2 SMBC may include disclaimers, as appropriate.
- 13.3 Any activities relating to an individual faith community activity must be covered by that community's own insurance policies.
- 13.4 Alterations to or Termination of this Constitution

- 13.5 A motion may be submitted to amend or terminate this constitution or and this may be considered at a special meeting. At least 14 days notice should be given to the Secretary. Such a motion must be approved by a two thirds majority of a registered members of the Forum,
- 13.6 The Forum may terminate its constitution with the agreement of two thirds of its membership.

14. ANNEX A - MEMBERSHIP OF SOLIHULL FAITHS FORUM STEERING GROUP

14.1 There will be 7 nominated representatives one each from the following faiths:

14.1.1 Anglican

14.1.2 Roman Catholic

14.1.3 Another Christian Church

14.1.4 Hindu

14.1.5 Jewish

14.1.6 Muslim

14.1.7 Sikh

14.2 There will be 5 additional places to be appointed by the Forum