

Whitley Bay Chamber of Trade

Constitution

1 - Name The name of the association is the **Whitley Bay Chamber of Trade**. Hereinafter referred to as the “Chamber”.

2 - Objectives

2.1 The objects for which the chamber is established are:-

2.11 For the association of businesses, social enterprises, charities, sole traders and retired members of the chamber to consider and promote all such lawful measures, plans and schemes as may be calculated to further, improve and secure the trading and commercial interests of the town of Whitley Bay and its neighbourhood.

2.12 To advance and promote the commercial and technical education through regular workshops and networking events.

2.13 To purchase, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any real or personal property, and any rights or privileges which the chamber may think necessary or convenient for the purpose of its business with the consent of the committee given in a regular meeting.

2.14 To support fair principles of trading and to create and foster a spirit of goodwill, friendship and unity among the business people of the town.

2.15 To subscribe to and support from the funds of the chamber such local charitable institutions and objects that may be deemed worthy.

2.16 To do all such lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects.

2.17 The chamber may affiliate to any appropriate regional or national chamber of trade or commerce and may be a component of any appropriate committee of that chamber.

3 - Membership

3.1 Membership of the chamber shall be open to all businesses, social enterprises, charities, sole traders and retired members of the chamber located in Whitley Bay and Neighbourhood and who are actively involved in business in Whitley Bay and Neighbourhood.

3.2 Membership of the Chamber will be effective upon receipt of a completed application form and payment being received. All new applicants will be recognised at a regular Committee Meeting or General Meeting, whichever comes first.

3.3 The Committee shall have power to refuse an application for membership without assigning a reason.

3.4 Any member who shall do any act or conduct calculated to injure or discredit the Chamber will be expelled from the Chamber by a resolution of the majority of the Committee.

4 - Subscriptions

4.1 All members shall pay an annual subscription, the fee to be reviewed and set annually at the Annual General Meeting and payable on 1st April each year.

4.2 New members joining the Chamber part way through a year shall pay a pro-rata subscription based on the number of full calendar months remaining until 31st March.

4.3 For new start up businesses, ie those trading for 6 months or less, membership of the Chamber is free for their first 6 months.

4.4 Registered charities can join the Chamber by setting up an annual standing order for £1. This is required to confirm their membership

4.5 No member shall be entitled to vote at a meeting of the Chamber if their subscription is two or more months in arrears.

4.6 All members are encouraged to pay their annual subscriptions by standing order to reduce the administration required.

5 - Executive Officers

5.1 The Executive Officers of the Chamber and their terms of office shall be as follows:

5.2 **Chairperson** - The Chairperson shall be responsible for representing the Chamber, chairing meetings and specifically responsible for public relations and contact with press and media.

5.3 **Secretary** - The Secretary shall be responsible for notifying members of Chamber activities and meetings. They will also prepare an agenda for meetings. Forwarding relevant information to the members and keeping a record of the proceedings of meetings. The Secretary will also prepare an annual report for distribution to the members before the AGM each year.

5.4 **Treasurer** - The Treasurer will be responsible for the financial control of all activities within the Chamber and shall present at the AGM an audited statement of accounts showing all financial transactions of the Chamber up to 31st March each year.

5.5 This group, the Executive Officers, will have the authority to act when necessary on behalf of the Chamber in between meetings of the Chamber or Chamber Committee.

5.6 It is the role of the Executive Officers to represent the majority views of the members of the Chamber at all times.

5.7 All Executive Officers shall be elected for one year at the AGM and shall retire annually but shall be eligible for re-election.

5.8 In the event of a vacancy occurring within the Executive Officers during the year the position may be filled by appointment by the Committee and approved at the next General Meeting by the members.

5.9 Executive Officers may only hold one position any any time.

5.10 Executive Officers are unpaid positions but these elected representatives or any member should be fairly recompensed for expenses incurred on behalf of the Chamber. Proper invoices are required to be presented prior to any payment being made by the Treasurer. Should any dispute over payment arise the matter will be resolved by discussion between Committee members.

6 - Committee

6.1 The Chamber Committee, hereinafter referred to as the Committee, will have full authority to act on behalf of the Chamber. The Committee will consist of the Executive Officers and sufficient ordinary members (minimum of two) who will share responsibility for the following Chamber activities:

- Community liaison
- North Tyneside Council liaison
- Membership
- PR and marketing
- Social media
- Chamber website
- Chamber events

6.2 It is the role of the Committee to represent the majority views of the members of the Chamber at all times.

6.3 All non Executive Officer positions within the Committee will be voted for at the AGM.

6.4 All non Executive Officers on the Committee shall be elected for one year at the AGM and shall retire annually but shall be eligible for re-election.

6.5 The Executive Officers shall have the authority to co-opt members onto the Committee as they deem appropriate.

6.6 The Committee shall have the authority to appoint such subcommittees or groups as it may require.

6.7 The Secretary shall take minutes of Committee meetings or appoint another Committee member to take them in their place.

6.8 Decisions in Committee and subcommittee taken by vote shall be determined by a simple majority. In the event of a tied vote, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

6.9 The Committee is responsible for any alteration to this constitution and a majority vote is required prior to any change being implemented.

6.10 For the Committee to be in quorum at least five persons need to be present

7 - Meetings

7.1 **The Annual General Meeting (AGM)** shall be held as soon as practical following the end of the financial year which is 31st March. At least 21 days notice of the meeting shall be given in writing to all members. The business of the meeting shall include the election of Executive Officers and Committee members together with reports from the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Notice of any proposed amendment to the Constitution of the Chamber, or any special resolutions should be proposed and seconded and must be submitted to the Secretary at least 21 days prior to the date of the meeting for inclusion in the agenda.

7.2 **Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)** - At the written request of ten members of the Chamber whose subscription is paid to date, or the request of the Chairperson, the Secretary shall convene an EGM of the Chamber to discuss the special business that is the subject of the request. No other business should be transacted at this meeting. All members shall be given 21 days notice of the EGM together with details of the proposed agenda.

7.3 **General Meetings** of the Chamber will take place usually every two months or as determined by the Committee. All members shall receive notice and an agenda at least seven days prior to the day of the meeting. These meetings are designed for all members or their representatives and also guests to air their views on matters of general interest and from time to time hear presentations from guest speakers. Every paid up member of the Chamber shall have the right to submit matters for discussion. Each member shall have one vote.

7.4 **Committee Meetings** will be arranged as and when required between General Meetings. Their purpose is to co-ordinate and manage the day to day affairs of the Chamber. The Secretary shall take minutes of Committee meetings or appoint another Committee member to take them in their place. Any changes to the Constitution of the Chamber must be approved by a majority decision of the Committee.

7.5 Quorums for meetings of the Chamber where a vote is required are:

Annual General Meeting - 12 members

Extraordinary General Meeting - 12 members

General Meeting - 10 members

Committee Meeting - 5 members

8 - Election Procedure

8.1 The Secretary shall notify all members of the timetable and procedure for the elected positions at least 21 days in advance of the AGM.

8.2 Nominations shall be submitted to the Secretary by post or email at least seven days in advance of the AGM unless there are exceptional extenuating circumstances.

8.3 Candidates for nomination for any of the Executive Officer positions should have at least one full year's membership of the Chamber prior to the year of election. Self nominations are acceptable.

8.4 The AGM shall vote to accept or reject each of the candidates nominated. A simple majority of those members present and entitled to vote shall determine the election for each position. Where there is more than one candidate nominated the voting procedure shall be by secret ballot unless all candidates agree otherwise.

9 - Communication to Members

9.1 The Secretary may use either post or email to communicate any official notice to members required under this constitution.

10 - Disclaimer

10.1 The Chamber accepts no liability in respect of any information provided in good faith to members or non-members of the Chamber, or in any respect of any business arrangements entered into privately between members of the Chamber and other members or non-members.

11 - Closure of the Chamber

11.1 No motion concerning the closure of the Chamber shall be discussed except at an Extraordinary General Meeting convened for that purpose by the Executive Officers of the Chamber and of which at least 21 days notice has been given in writing to all members of the Chamber. In the event of a resolution being passed to close the Chamber, any funds being held by the Chamber, including the chain of office, shall be put in the hands of three trustees appointed at the EGM for that purpose. The Trustees will be instructed to lodge the funds in a Trust Fund set up for the benefit of any future Chamber of Trade which may be formed in Whitley Bay.

This constitution was approved at the Committee Meeting held on 12th July 2016