

Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Forum Constitution

Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Forum Constitution**1. Name**

The name of the Forum will be Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Forum (The Forum).

2. Area of Benefit

- 2.1 The Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Forum Area is situated just north of the centre of Northampton and includes three distinct areas; Semilong, Trinity and the Racecourse Park. The A508 artery Barrack Road, runs between the Semilong and Trinity wards with the Racecourse running along the southern edge of the Trinity ward.
- 2.2 The Forum will pursue its objectives in the Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Area (the Area of Benefit), as outlined in Appendix 2. The boundaries of the Area of Benefit have been defined by local people as members of the Neighbourhood Forum.
- 2.3 The area falls entirely within the administrative boundary of Northampton Borough Council. Northampton Borough Council is the Local Planning Authority responsible for producing the Development Plan for Northampton. The Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan and will be used by Development Management in the determination of planning applications that will affect the Neighbourhood Area.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 To prepare, implement and monitor progress of a Neighbourhood Plan for the Semilong/Trinity Neighbourhood Area;
- 3.2 To promote or improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the Semilong/Trinity Neighbourhood Area;
- 3.3 To promote and preserve the historical/heritage features of the Semilong/Trinity Neighbourhood Area.

4. Membership

- 4.1 The membership of the Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Forum is open to anyone but must include at least 21 individuals who are either:
 - a) Residents living in the Neighbourhood Area;
 - b) Elected ward councillors for the Area;
 - c) Individuals working in the Area;
 - d) Individuals who are representatives of organisations or businesses active in the Area.
- 4.2 The Forum will take reasonable steps to ensure that its membership includes at least one individual falling within each of (a), (b), (c) and (d).
- 4.3 Anyone wishing to become a Forum member must complete a simple application form which will be considered by the Forum at its next meeting.

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- 4.4 Applications must be received no later than the seven days before the meeting or when the meeting papers are sent out (whichever is the earlier), to be able to vote at a Forum meeting.
- 4.5 An up to date membership list will be kept by the Secretary.
- 4.6 The Forum will take all reasonable steps to ensure its membership is representative of the diversity of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.7 Memberships and resignations shall be received and considered by the Forum.
- 4.8 The Secretary will report the current level of members at each Forum meeting, as well as the number present at that meeting (to see if there is a quorum for voting purposes). If membership falls below the minimum level of 21 people required, the Forum will actively recruit more members to bring it back to the minimum level and no decisions will be taken until this is the case.

5. General Policies and Principles

5.1 The Forum will:

- Encourage involvement and membership of the Forum by residents, local representative groups and /or societies, and businesses in the area;
- Respect differences including gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability and income;
- Foster community spirit;
- Generally support actions generating employment and supporting local businesses in the area;
- Promote sustainable development and environmental improvement;
- Work to improve the well-being of local people and those who come here for education, work or recreation;
- Publicise and promote the work of the Forum;
- Work with other local groups and exchange information, advice and knowledge;
- Draw up any codes and policies it feels necessary to support its work.

5.2 The Forum is politically and religiously neutral.

6. Powers

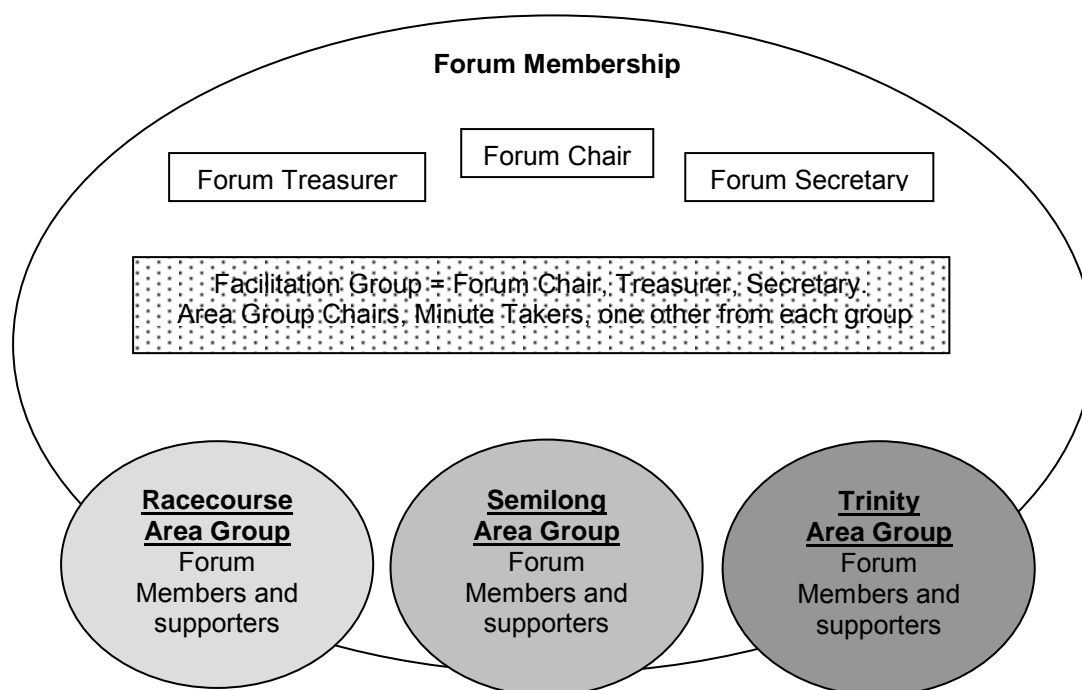
6.1 In furtherance of its objectives the Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Forum may:

1. Invite and receive contributions and raise funds where appropriate, to finance the work of the Forum, and to open a bank account to manage such funds;
2. Publicise and promote the work of the Forum and organise meetings, training courses, events or seminars etc;
3. Work with groups of a similar nature and exchange information, advice and knowledge with them, including cooperation with other voluntary bodies, charities, statutory and non-statutory organisations;

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4. Recruit volunteers as are necessary to conduct activities to meet the objects of the Forum;
5. Take any form of appropriate action to achieve the objectives of the Forum, including commissioning goods and services.
6. In all its activities, the Forum will give due consideration to best value and due diligence.

7. Meeting Structure



8. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- 8.1 Annual General Meetings (AGMs) will be held not later than 3 months after the end of the Financial Year, which will be determined on registration of The Forum.
- 8.2 The Forum Chair, the Forum Treasurer and the Forum Secretary (The 'Officers') will be elected at each AGM for the following year.
- 8.3 Members shall be given at least fourteen days' notice of when and where the meeting is to be held and of the agenda.
- 8.4 Reports from each Officer will be given, including annual accounts.
- 8.5 Each Area Group will present a brief annual report.
- 8.6 Decisions will be by a simple majority. If there is a tied vote the Chair shall have a casting vote.
- 8.7 A quorum for voting purposes will be one third of the membership, but must include at least two Officers (see above), and at least one member from each Area Group.
- 8.8 At any AGM, each member present will have one vote.

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- 8.9 Where practical, arrangements will be made to enable members who are unable to attend a meeting, to appoint the Chair as their proxy.
- 8.10 An accurate record of meetings will be kept by the Secretary or agreed minute-taker.

9. Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

- 9.1 An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called by decision of the Facilitation Group or by 21 members of the Forum applying to the Secretary.
- 9.2 For all EGMs, Forum members will be given at least fourteen days' notice of the meeting and details of any proposed resolutions.
- 9.3 At any EGM, each member present will have one vote.
- 9.4 Where practical, arrangements will be made to enable members who are unable to attend a meeting, to appoint the Chair as their proxy.
- 9.5 An accurate record of meetings will be kept by the Secretary or agreed minute taker.

10. Forum Meetings

- 10.1 The purpose of the Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Forum is to be the decision-making body, which prepares an overarching Neighbourhood Plan reflecting the proposals & recommendations of the 3 Area Groups.
- 10.2 Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Forum meetings will be held as required and will be open to all registered members of the Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Forum and any other interested people.
- 10.3 The Forum decisions will be made by a simple majority of those present with voting rights (full members of the Forum). If there is a tied vote, the Chair shall have a casting vote.

11. Facilitation Group Meetings

- 11.1 The purpose of the Facilitation Group is to ensure that co-ordination takes place across the whole of the Neighbourhood Plan area. It will ensure that the voices of each of the specific Areas are heard and taken into consideration across the whole of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 11.2 Facilitation group meetings will take place as necessary and will consist of the elected Forum Chair, Treasurer & Secretary and 3 members for each of the 3 Area Groups, usually The Chair, Minute Taker and one other member of each Area Group.
- 11.3 The Facilitation Group will also be responsible for the administration of the business of the Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Forum.

12. Area Group Meetings

- 12.1 The purpose of each Area Group will be to focus on the issues and considerations relevant to each specific area; Semilong or Trinity or Racecourse, with proposals & recommendations being brought back to the Neighbourhood Forum meetings for consideration and / or adoption.
- 12.2 Area group meetings will be open to all registered members of the Neighbourhood Forum and who are either:
- a. Residents living in the specific Semilong, Trinity or Racecourse Area;
 - b. Elected ward councillors for the specific Area;
 - c. Individuals working in the specific Semilong, Trinity or Racecourse Area;
 - d. Individuals who are representatives of organisations or businesses active in the specific Semilong, Trinity or Racecourse Area.
- 12.3 Area group meetings will take place as necessary.
- 12.4 A Chair and Minute Taker will be elected within each of the specific Semilong, Trinity or Racecourse Area Groups.
- 12.5 An accurate record of meetings will be kept by the agreed Minute Taker and shared with all other members of the Forum, for example by email or by making them available on a Forum website.

13. Officers/ Facilitators

The Facilitation Group shall consist of the following:

Officers:

- i) Forum Chair
- ii) Forum Secretary
- iii) Forum Treasurer

Facilitators:

- iv) Racecourse Area Group Chair
- v) Racecourse Area Group Minute Taker
- vi) Racecourse Area Group One other person
- vii) Semilong Area Group Chair
- viii) Semilong Area Group Minute Taker
- ix) Semilong Area Group One other person
- x) Trinity Area Group Chair
- xi) Trinity Area Group Minute Taker
- xii) Trinity Area Group One other person

14. Finance

- 14.1 A bank account will be opened with the agreement of a Forum meeting.
- 14.2 A Treasurer will be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Forum to serve for a period of 12 months. The Treasurer will maintain financial records and present verified annual accounts.

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14.3 A Forum account will have three unrelated signatories, usually The Officers, and all financial transactions must be approved by at least two signatories.

15. Code of Conduct

15.1 All members of the Forum will treat each other with respect.

15.2 All members of the Forum will be expected to comply with the Seven Nolan Principles:

16. Seven Nolan Principles:

1. **Selflessness** – Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
2. **Integrity** – Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
3. **Objectivity** – In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
4. **Accountability** – Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
5. **Openness** – Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
6. **Honesty** – Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
7. **Leadership** – Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

17. Informal Complaints (handled by Area Group)

17.1 Any member of the Forum is encouraged to bring concerns to the notice of a member of their Area Group.

17.2 All complaints will be acknowledged within 48 hours.

17.3 The person receiving the complaint will convey the matter to the Chair, minute-taker and one other Area Group member within 2 working days and one of these people will endeavour to contact the person expressing concern within a further 2 working days.

17.4 Every effort will be made to resolve issues at this informal stage. The ethos of the Forum is that we will always listen to, discuss and take seriously any issues brought to our attention. Formal records of informal complaints are rarely kept. Where it is perceived there is a requirement to keep a record of correspondence and statements, the complaint will normally have escalated to being a formal complaint.

18. Formal Complaints (handled by the Facilitation Group)

- 18.1 If the complaint has not been resolved by informal discussion, then it may be made into a Formal Complaint on completion of the Notification of an Official Complaint form. This form is available from the Forum Chair or any member of the Facilitation Group.
- 18.2 If the formal complaint or concern cannot be resolved within three weeks, the matter will be referred to the Facilitation Group. They will then contact the person making the complaint, usually within 10 working days, to discuss the matter and review the information gathered and matters already discussed. They will keep a record of the complaint alongside any correspondence and statements, storing these confidentially. It is hoped that this investigation will bring about a resolution. The person responding to the Formal Complaint, will make a confidential written record of the discussion and a copy of this will be given to the person making the complaint, indicating the date the matter was resolved.

19. Panel-hearing (Forum Officers)

- 19.1 If there is no resolution of the formal complaint then the complaint can be referred to the Forum Officers (Chair, Treasurer or Secretary). The Officers will conduct a further investigation and/or review the information provided by the person who has heard the Formal Complaint or the person making the complaint, including any statements provided. This normally will be completed within a further 10 working days. Once the Forum Officers have collected all relevant information together, and have reviewed all aspects of the complaint, they will make a decision regarding the complaint. They will communicate this decision in writing to the person making the complaint within a further 5 working days, outlining the reasons for the decision and keeping a confidential record of the matter. The person involved in the complaint will be given a copy of any findings and recommendations.
- 19.2 The Forum will not investigate an anonymous complaint.

20. Conflicts of interest

- 20.1 The Secretary will keep a Register of Forum Members' Interests, which will be annually updated. Details of any financial or business interests in the Area, or any other interest which could be deemed to have an influence on decisions likely to come before the Forum or Area group meetings, must be declared.
- 20.2 Members must declare any potential conflict of interest prior to the start of the Forum or sub-group meetings. Members will abstain from voting on any matter in which they have a financial or business interest, and may be excluded from the discussion.

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21. Data Protection

21.1 All personal data acquired by Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Forum from the membership form shall only be used for the purposes of contacting members by email or phone for Semilong & Trinity Neighbourhood Forum business only.

21.2 The Forum will act in accordance with Northampton Borough Council's Data Protection Policy.

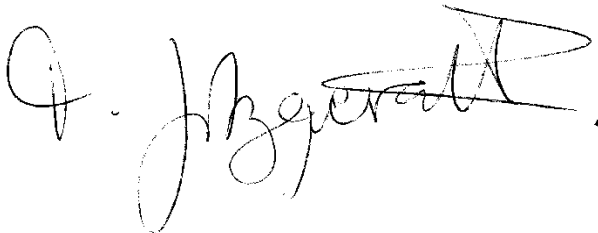
22. Duration and dissolution

22.1 The Forum has a life span of 5 years from its inception and will automatically dissolve unless it is previously wound up or extended in a different form, by resolution at a Forum meeting. 28 days' notice of the resolution must be given to all members. The resolution must attain a two-thirds majority of those present and eligible to vote.

22.2 Any assets or funds remaining after debts have been paid shall be returned to providers, or transferred to local charities or groups with similar aims, at the discretion of the Facilitation Group.

23. Alterations to the constitution

23.1 Amendments to the body of this Constitution will be by decision of a General Meeting and will only be carried if supported by two-thirds or more of those present and eligible to vote.



Signed

Chairperson

Date: 3 May, 2017



Signed

Secretary

Date: 13 April, 2017

Appendix 1: Background to the Forum

Since April 2012 (under the Localism Act) local communities have been able to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for their local area, putting into place planning policies for the future development and growth of the neighbourhood. A Neighbourhood Plan relates to the use and development of land and associated social, economic and environmental issues. It can include housing, employment, heritage and transport. It can also focus on one or two issues of particular importance in a local area.

The growth and development of two Academy schools, an existing school for special needs children and Bosworth Independent College means that in the next few years there will be upwards of 4,000 children and young people going to and from schools and the college in the area. Safety of these pupils and students walking or cycling, and the management of traffic is a priority.

The development of the University site on St George's Avenue will provide 200 dwellings, meaning more people and families in the area. The loss of family homes to houses in multiple occupation (HiMOs), particularly in Semilong, creates a loss of community spirit due to the transient nature of many of these residents. Additional homes are needed for the families of future students of the International Academy on Barrack Road to reduce travelling and its impact on the environment.

The Racecourse is a vital green space in the area, enjoyed by thousands of local residents and visitors each month. The preservation of this facility in the face of future developments and changes is a high priority.

Behind St George's Avenue, there is a longstanding Wildlife Area, which includes foxes, badgers and many other types of wildlife important to the ecology of the area.

With the prospect of several factors affecting the neighbourhood in the next few years the formation of a Neighbourhood Plan was seen as a way for local residents to have a say in how these developments and changes would be managed, for the benefit of current and future citizens.

The value of a Neighbourhood Plan is that it sits within planning law alongside the Local Plan, the Joint Core Strategy and the Northampton Central Area Plan. If there is a Neighbourhood Plan in place any CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) from building development is allocated at 25% to the local area instead of 15% if there is no Neighbourhood Plan in place. This is significant funding to implement the aims and vision of a Neighbourhood Plan.

There is also funding from the government, managed by Locality, for consultation, professional help and advice and the preparation of plans.

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Appendix 2: Map

