

# **PLUMPTON VILLAGE ACTION PLAN**

## **Plumpton Village Action Plan Steering Committee Constitution**

### **1. Name & Object**

- 1.1 The name of the organisation is the ***Plumpton Village Action Plan Steering Committee***, (“the Steering Committee”). The Steering Committee was established on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008.
- 1.2 The Object of the Steering Committee is to oversee the implementation of the Plumpton Village Action Plan (“VAP”) (distributed to all households in July 2008), using the **Implementation Plan adopted by Plumpton Parish Council on 20th May 2008** (“the Implementation Plan”), on behalf of the residents of Plumpton.
- 1.3 It is possible that VAP may be required to become a registered Charity. Therefore, it will follow the principles applicable to being a Charity registered with the Charity Commissioners.

### **2. Purpose of the Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee will:

- 2.1 Encourage Village Action Plan Teams, (“VAP Teams”), to research and action the tasks set out in the Implementation Plan. In particular the Steering Committee will:
  - a) Ensure that the Terms of Reference for each of the VAP Teams are relevant and up to date;
  - b) Ensure that each VAP Team Leader observes and follows the Terms of Reference for each VAP Team;
  - c) Ensure that, where possible, each VAP Team has persons appointed, with experience relevant to the particular subject, drawn from volunteers from within the community, and that the representation on each VAP Team reflects the profile of residents in the community; and
  - d) Ensure that each VAP Team has Parish Council (“PC”) representation or engagement, where possible or relevant.
- 2.2 Ensure that the Plumpton Village Action Plan Sub-Committee, (“the Sub-Committee”), continues to review, monitor and support VAP Teams, particularly that any research is being conducted in line with the Implementation Plan, and within the time deadlines agreed and set out in that document. The Sub-Committee shall consist of at least a quorum of Officers of the Steering Committee and VAP Team Leaders or representatives, and shall meet as frequently as is necessary.

- 2.3 Take responsibility for planning, budgeting and monitoring expenditure on the VAP, and VAP Team project timescales. In particular:
- a) Establish the most beneficial financial structure for the VAP to allow the Steering Committee to maximise the ability to raise funds;
  - b) Review funding requirements and project timescales recommended by each VAP Team, and determine the overall balance of priorities for driving the Implementation Plan forward;
  - c) Lead all fundraising initiatives arising from the work of the Steering Committee and Sub-Committee;
  - d) Review the method of fundraising and potential sources of project funding for each VAP Team, and, where necessary, guide the VAP Teams if they have identified funding sources themselves for their respective Action Plans; and
  - e) Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations (or delegate liaison if appropriate) to make the Implementation Plan as effective as possible, with PC support or knowledge wherever the activity relates to PC responsibilities.
- 2.4 Act as a formal communication channel on VAP matters, and in particular, in accordance with the stated aim of the PC to engage effectively with VAP via representatives from the various VAP Teams:
- a) Report regularly to the PC on progress, issues arising and outcomes from the Implementation Plan;
  - b) Determine those actions in the Implementation Plan that require PC formal approval, and manage the process for seeking approval;
  - c) Keep the PC informed on the progress of actions that do not require formal approval as a matter of course; and
  - d) Regularly keep the community informed as to the progress on each of the actions in the Implementation Plan.
- 2.5 Publish a policy on equal opportunities that ensures the activities and conduct of the VAP complies with equality obligations under the various pieces of anti-discrimination legislation, and also monitor the implementation of the policy.

### **3. Officers of the Steering Committee**

- 3.1 The Steering Committee will consist of a minimum of five, but no more than seven, elected Officers.
- 3.2 No more than two elected Officers can be members of the Plumpton Parish Council.
- 3.3 Officers of the Steering Committee shall be elected every two years. The first of these elections shall be at the 2010 Annual Meeting, and every two years thereafter.

- 3.4. Every two years, Officers of the Steering Committee must stand for re-election or stand down for new Officers to be elected and appointed.

#### **4. Election of Officers to the Steering Committee**

- 4.1. All residents of the Parish of Plumpton (“residents”) are deemed to be members of VAP.
- 4.2. Residents can exercise their rights as members of VAP by attending the Annual Meeting and signing an attendance record confirming that they are a resident.
- 4.3. Each resident, in attendance at the Annual Meeting, shall have one vote at the Annual Meeting.
- 4.4. Candidates wishing to stand for election as an Officer of the Steering Committee must be nominated and seconded by residents of the Parish of Plumpton. Candidates must be existing Officers of the Steering Committee or members of a VAP Team for at least the full period from 31<sup>st</sup> May to the date of the Annual Meeting. Nomination forms must be received by the Secretary of VAP, two weeks before the relevant Annual Meeting.
- 4.5. In the event that there are seven or fewer candidates (but taking into account paragraph 3.1.) nominated and proposed, these candidates will be deemed to be the elected, uncontested, appointed Officers of the Steering Committee.
- 4.6. In the event that there are more than seven qualifying candidates, a secret ballot shall be held at the Annual Meeting by those residents in attendance at the relevant Annual Meeting.

#### **5. Appointment to Specific Officer Roles on the Steering Committee**

- 5.1. Once the Steering Committee is elected, Officers will be elected and appointed by that Committee.
- 5.2. The Steering Committee must appoint Officers to the following roles to conduct its business:
  - a) Chair
  - b) Vice-Chair
  - c) Treasurer
  - d) Publicity Officer
  - e) Secretary

Other Officers will be known as Officers without portfolio.

*Note: The Chair and the Treasurer must be separate Officers.*

- 5.3. The Steering Committee can also appoint Officers to other roles as required. Officers can hold more than one role providing there is no conflict between roles or responsibilities.
- 5.4. Deputies to certain of the Officers may also be appointed.
- 5.5. The Steering Committee may co-opt additional members at its discretion to carry out specific roles (e.g. Displays Co-Coordinator). Such co-opted members will not have voting rights. The total number of concurrent co-opted members will not exceed two.
- 5.6. An Officer shall cease to be on the Steering Committee if:
  - a) He/she notifies the Chair in writing of his/her wish to resign;
  - b) He/she is absent from meetings without notification or good reason for three consecutive meetings (subject to a vote of Steering Committee Officers); or
  - c) He/she acts illegally or inappropriately as a Steering Committee Officer (subject to a fair hearing and vote by the Steering Committee or as the result of legal proceedings).

## **6. Steering Committee Meetings**

- 6.1 The Steering Committee will meet every three months as a minimum, or more frequently as required.
- 6.2 Officers will be given at least seven days' written notice of Committee Meetings. An agenda will be sent out prior to the meeting.
- 6.3 All Steering Committee Meetings held must have a quorum of four voting Officers, including the Chair or Vice-Chair present.
- 6.4 All business matters, where appropriate, shall be determined by a simple majority of votes of Steering Committee Officers present and voting. In the case of an equal vote, the Chair of that meeting will have a casting vote.
- 6.5 Whenever possible, Steering Committee Meetings should be held at least one week prior to the appropriate Parish Council Meeting.
- 6.6 Ad-hoc meetings may be called at shorter notice for specific issues to be discussed. The quorum rule and meeting Chair rules at 5.3 above will be applicable to such meetings. The outcome of any such meeting can be deemed binding at that time, although the outcome, process and any subsequent actions must be reported formally to the next full Steering Committee Meeting for ratification, if necessary and minuted accordingly. *Note – common sense must be applied to ad-hoc meetings. If a vote is split, consideration of the implications of further actions must be given, in case those unable to attend and vote have cause to challenge the decision.*

- 6.7. The Secretary shall keep a record of meetings and votes, and circulate minutes to Steering Committee Officers. The Minutes of a Steering Committee Meeting must be agreed at the next meeting. The Minutes are lodged on the VAP website for access to all residents.

## **7. Annual Meeting**

- 7.1 The Annual Meeting shall be held during September of each year.
- 7.2 The purpose of each Annual Meeting is to report to residents on progress made against the Implementation Plan, future actions being considered by VAP Teams, and to report and approve the Annual Accounts of the VAP.
- 7.3 Every second year, commencing from September 2010, there will also be an election of Officers of the Steering Committee as outlined in para 4 above.
- 7.4 The rules for calling the Annual Meeting, running the Annual Meeting and quorum details are as for other meetings. The Secretary will keep a record of those residents attending the Annual Meeting.

## **8. Finance Matters**

- 8.1 The Treasurer shall keep a clear record of income and expenditure, where necessary supported by receipted invoices, and table a financial report at each meeting of the Steering Committee. Where funds are raised or received for a specific VAP action (including grant income and targeted fundraising), these will be reported as 'Restricted Funds' in the Accounts, will only be used for that purpose (whilst that purpose exists) and associated expenditure will be clearly recorded. Any surplus 'Restricted Funds' after an action has closed will be moved into general funds (subject to a majority vote of a quorum of Steering Committee Officers). All other income (and associated expenditure) shall be reported as 'Unrestricted'.
- 8.2 The VAP Financial Year End will be 31<sup>st</sup> August.
- 8.3 The Treasurer shall present a draft Annual Account of income and expenditure for Steering Committee Officers to approve, prior to the Annual meeting. The Final Account shall be presented to those residents present at the Annual Meeting to approve.
- 8.4 Should it have been determined that the most beneficial structure is to be registered as a Charity, it should be noted that under the Charities Act 2006, where either income or expenditure exceed £10,000 in any one year, the Steering Committee Officers must appoint an independent examiner to check and report on the Annual Accounts and associated records and report back to the Steering Committee within

three months of the Annual Meeting. The Steering Committee has, however, decided to appoint an independent examiner to comment on the financial records within three months of each year-end, as best practice.

- 8.5 All payments will require the approval of a quorum of the Steering Committee (as per para 6.3). However, in the event of an emergency requirement to make a payment when a quorum is not possible, two signatories may make a payment up to a maximum of £250. This will be ratified by the Steering Committee at the next available meeting.
- 8.6 At the start of each year, the Steering Committee will agree a budget for expenses for each VAP Team. The management of this budget will be delegated to each Team leader. Volunteers with any of the Teams may claim back any expenditure that was necessarily incurred during the process of working within a Team, provided the Team Leader has approved the expenditure prior to the cost being incurred. The Team Leader will also seek approval from the Chair of the Steering Committee (or a nominated representative).
- 8.7 The Treasurer will draw up and agree with the Steering Committee procedures for volunteers who wish to claim expenses and the rates they may claim.
- 8.8 The Treasurer will be responsible for maintaining the Steering Committee's own banking arrangements and will operate any bank accounts on the basis of a minimum two authorised signatories for cheques drawn, both of whom will be Officers (as agreed by the Steering Committee).

## **9. Publicity**

- 9.1 The Publicity Officer will be responsible for liaising with the PC and submitting papers to the PC on a timely basis.
- 9.2 No documents will be submitted to the PC without the consent of a quorum of Steering Committee Officers, as outlined at para 6.3
- 9.3 In addition, the Publicity Officer will be responsible for ensuring that documents are posted on the Village web-sites and reported in the Parish Magazine. No documents will be published without the consent of a quorum of Steering Committee Officers, as outlined at para 6.3

## **10. Changes to the Constitution**

- 10.1 This Constitution may only be altered by a minimum of five Officers of the Steering Committee. Any proposal to change the Constitution must be clearly communicated to all Officers at least seven days before the meeting at which a vote would take place.

- 10.2 Changes to the Constitution shall be ratified by those residents present at the Annual Meeting. The PC will be advised of any such changes.

**11. Dissolution of the Committee**

- 11.1 Once the Steering Committee concludes that the requirements of the VAP have largely been completed, the Steering Committee may be dissolved at any time thereafter by the approving votes of a minimum of five Officers of the Steering Committee voting at a subsequent Steering Committee Meeting.

- 11.2 Upon dissolution the Steering Committee shall dispose of any remaining funds held for the purpose for which the Steering Committee was established. Any remaining funds shall be distributed to any charitable (or non-profit making) organisation(s), whose aims and objectives are similar to those for which the Steering Committee was established. Ideally, such organisation(s) will be within the Parish of Plumpton. Such disposition can only be made by the approving votes of a minimum of five Officers of the Steering Committee present and voting at a Steering Committee meeting.

- 11.3 The Steering Committee will give any further unappropriated funds to the PC.

**12. Interpretation**

- 12.1 Any question about the interpretation of this Constitution should in the first instance be dealt with by the Steering Committee. If further interpretation is required, the Steering Committee will agree to consider an independent opinion, providing all parties concerned can be assured of complete independence.