

# GODSTONE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING COMMITTEE

## CONSTITUTION

Planning for the future of the Parish of Godstone

### Name and Definitions

1. Godstone Parish Council is the relevant body for the purpose of Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
2. The 'Neighbourhood Area', herein known as the 'Area' is the designation of the Parish of Godstone boundaries, (Blindley Heath, South Godstone and Godstone, as per the attached map), in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
3. The 'Godstone Parish Neighbourhood Planning Committee' is the name of the constituted steering group for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for Godstone Parish and is herein known as 'GPNPC'.
4. The Godstone Parish Council has devolved responsibility for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan to the GPNPC.
5. The 'Group' is defined as all volunteers that have put their names forwards, from time to time, and are actively involved, in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan.
6. Where reference is made to Godstone, this includes the village of Godstone, South Godstone and Blindley Heath which constitute the Parish referenced under 'Neighbourhood Area' and the parish boundaries.

### Purposes and Aims

7. To further the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the community by the production of a Neighbourhood Plan for independent examination, referendum and adoption by the Local Planning Authority<sup>1</sup>.
8. The Group will specifically function to fulfil the requirements of producing a Neighbourhood Plan for adoption agreement by Godstone Parish Council and adoption by Tandridge District Council as defined by the Localism Act (2011).
9. The GPNPC will work as an independent group reporting to Godstone Parish Council.
10. Godstone Parish Council is an adopter of the government's Localism Act (2011), and any later amendments, aimed at transferring some planning powers to the community. At the heart of this process is the bringing together of the different communities in the Parish of Godstone and identifying and developing their ideas, needs, and aspirations, and working them up into feasible development options.
11. The GPNPC does not purport to represent all the views of the community but is a working group to collect information, identify development issues and objectives, and to define feasible options for consideration so that, as far as possible the wider community is enabled to make an informed choice.

### Neighbourhood Plan

12. The Godstone Neighbourhood Plan (NP) will set out policies for the development and use of land within the Area<sup>2</sup>. As provided through the Localism Act, it will be subject to extensive consultation and examination, including a referendum within the Area.
13. The NP will include specific policies for identified parts of the Area, including conservation policies. In respect of the Conservation Area, conservation policies will be agreed with the Tandridge District Council Conservation Officer.
14. The NP will aim to:
  - a. where possible conform to the Local Plan, (currently in draft form), prepared by Tandridge District Council and, in particular, in relation to the protection of the Green Belt,
  - b. conform to the National Planning Policy Framework guidelines,
  - c. identify locations within the NP Area for housing including affordable housing, retail, business, tourism, education and other community use,

<sup>1</sup> The term 'Local Planning Authority' refers to the Tandridge District Council Local Planning Authority

<sup>2</sup> The term 'Area' in respect to this constitution references the Godstone Parish Council defined Neighbourhood Area Constitution of the Godstone Neighbourhood Planning Committee

- d. identify infrastructure needs to support development such as; transport, healthcare, emergency care, educational and employment opportunities,
- e. express aspirations for the future development of traffic and transport serving or passing through the Area,
- f. encourage walking and cycling within the designated Area as a preferred means of transport,
- g. provide for the preservation and improvement of public open spaces,
- h. nominate Assets of Community Value for listing by Tandridge District Council,
- i. set a framework for the retail and business improvement of the Area,
- j. guide the Planning and Highway Authorities towards improvements in the public realm,
- k. set design standards for future development,
- l. pay due attention to sustainability and carbon reduction,
- m. pay due attention to the surface and underground water environment, flood and pollution risks and soil stability.

## **General Policies And Principles**

15. The GPNPC will embrace the general policies and principles of the Parish Council in respect of:
- a. taking the distinctive character and heritage of Godstone Parish into account in all its actions, and will aim to ensure that all development in the Area preserves or enhances this character,
  - b. promoting Godstone Parish as a vibrant business and residential community,
  - c. promoting policies to maximise social benefit, community links, services for young people, crime reduction and support for elderly and vulnerable members of the community,
  - d. respecting all differences including gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability and income,
  - e. encouraging all interested residents and all representative groupings of residents or businesses in the Area to engage with the GPNPC and to work alongside the Group to further their joint objectives.

## **Area of Operation**

16. The Godstone Neighbourhood Plan Area is as defined in paragraph 2 of this constitution and shall be confirmed by Godstone Parish Council and endorsed by Tandridge District Council

17. All activities of the GPNPC will relate to land within or policies which apply to the NP Area as defined in paragraph 2 of this constitution.

## **Notices**

18. Any notice required to be served on members and member organisations of the GPNPC shall be served by the Secretary of the committee and may be served by email or second class post.

19. Any notice of a public meeting to be held in connection with the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan shall be served by the Clerk to the Godstone Parish Council and a copy of such Notice shall be posted on the Godstone Parish Council Notice Board and emailed to the Secretary of the GPNPC.

## **Operating Conditions**

20. The GPNPC is open to all residents living in, or whose place of work is in the Neighbourhood Area. A minimum of 11 members are required to form the steering committee and must include at least one representative from the Parish Council, and at least one representative from Blindley Heath, South Godstone and Godstone where practical. The steering committee will have a maximum of 15 members.

21. The GPNPC will publish the names of all members of the Group.

22. The GPNPC will be responsible for ensuring, wherever possible, that membership of the Group reflects a broad representation from those who live and work within the community defined by the Area of the NP

23. All members of the GPNPC must declare any interest in, or the likelihood of financial gain from, any interest in any proposal relevant to the Plan

24. The Group will meet on a regular basis throughout the period of the Plan and use reasonable endeavours to reach consensus within the Group.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'Local Planning Authority' refers to the Tandridge District Council Local Planning Authority

<sup>2</sup> The term 'Area' in respect to this constitution references the Godstone Parish Council defined Neighbourhood Area Constitution of the Godstone Neighbourhood Planning Committee

25. Minutes of the GPNPC and its sub-committees will be published on the Godstone.net website and will be circulated to Committee members within 21 days of any meeting.

26. The GPNPC will:

- a. generate a clear vision for the future that reflects the needs and wishes of the community,
- b. reflect the wider community support and choices for the Plan,
- c. create and follow a programme that builds on work already undertaken,
- d. seek advice and guidance when necessary from the Tandridge District Council and from the other advisory bodies to develop a Neighbourhood Plan that is based on clear evidence, objectives and options,
- e. produce a Plan that is reasonable, meets the needs of the community and is capable of being delivered,
- f. co-opt, where necessary, willing persons or organisations to assist with the production of a Neighbourhood Plan who may or may not be residents of the Parish.

## **Composition and Meetings of the GPNPC**

27. The GPNPC will elect officers from within its membership, these will include a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

28. Godstone Parish Council will appoint a nominated representative to act as liaison between the GPNPC and the Parish Council. The appointed representative, (the 'Liaison Officer'), shall:

- a. act as the conduit between the GPNPC and the Parish Council,
- b. communicate to the GPNPC any wishes of the Parish Council,
- c. communicate to the Parish Council any requirements of the GPNPC.

29. The Godstone Parish Council nominated representative shall not:

- a. be responsible for the actions of the GPNPC,
- b. be responsible for any fiscal activities of the GPNPC.

30. The Chair of the GPNPC, shall:

- a. work closely with other elected officers on the activities of the Group,
- b. call and chair regular meetings of the GPNPC, (for which a quorum will be one third of its members),
- c. act on behalf of the GPNPC and represent it both to the Parish Council and externally,
- d. have the power to take decisions on urgent matters between meetings of the GPNPC, although these must be ratified at the next GPNPC meeting,
- e. interpret the constitution. The Chair's interpretation may be overturned by two-thirds of those present at the Group Meetings.

31. The Vice Chair of the GPNPC, shall:

- a. work closely with other elected officers on the activities of the Group,
- b. act as deputy and in the capacity of, or when acting as, the Chair have the same powers as the Chair.

32. The Treasurer, shall:

- a. be responsible for maintaining the accounts of the GPNPC ,
- b. be responsible for presenting a budget annually to the Parish Council,
- c. submit a detailed summary of the accounts when required at GPNPC meetings and for Parish Council meetings as required.

33. The role of Secretary shall:

- a. be responsible for organising meetings, maintaining the minutes and Constitution of the GPNPC and making the minutes available to members, (of the Group), and publishing them on the Godstone.net website,
- b. liaise with the Parish Council on matters of constitution or other matters that might require specific Parish Council agreements or consent.

34. The Chair and Secretary will be responsible for dealing with all communications within the Group and with third parties such as District and County Councils, residents, traders and other local communities, developers, investors and companies.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'Local Planning Authority' refers to the Tandridge District Council Local Planning Authority

<sup>2</sup> The term 'Area' in respect to this constitution references the Godstone Parish Council defined Neighbourhood Area Constitution of the Godstone Neighbourhood Planning Committee

35. Any proposed amendments to the Constitution needs a majority of the Group, (at least two-thirds), agreeing to such change, (other than to comply with the Law).
36. The Chair will have a casting vote on matters relating to elections, resolutions and all matters requiring a vote by the committee. All voting procedure will be by a show of hands with the vote carried by majority.
37. Only members and member organisations representatives present at a meeting shall be entitled to vote. Proxy voting will not be permitted.
38. In the event that the Chair is absent from a Group meeting the Vice Chair or another officer will chair the meeting and will have the powers of the Chair for the duration of that meeting.
39. Subcommittees, working parties or individuals may be appointed by the GPNPC to carry out specific tasks, to consider policies and to advise the committee. Such bodies must report to the GPNPC as soon as is reasonably possible following a meeting.
40. The officers and members of the GPNPC or any sub-committee shall not be liable for any loss suffered by the GPNPC as a result of the discharge of their duties on its behalf and they shall be entitled to an indemnity from Godstone Parish Council for all liabilities incurred by them in the discharge of their duties.
41. The GPNC will refer to the Godstone Parish Council through the Liaison Officer at all times, but will require approval from Godstone Parish Council for these specific 'gateway' points:
- a. Approval of this, the constitution of the GPNC
  - b. The first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan
  - c. Prior to submission of the Neighbourhood Plan
  - d. Prior to examination of the Neighbourhood Plan
  - e. Prior to referendum
  - f. Prior to final acceptance of the Neighbourhood Plan

## **Public Meetings**

42. A public meeting will be held at least quarterly for the duration of the period from inception to acceptance of the Neighbourhood Plan. Such meetings shall be notified by the Clerk to the Parish Council and the agenda for the meeting will be published at least three working days in advance of the meeting and will make proposals in line with those 'gateway' points under paragraph 41.

## **Finance**

43. It will be necessary to account for all funds that may be forthcoming in respect of the NP process. A record of all financial must be recorded and accounted for by the Treasurer.
44. All monies received by, or donated to, the GPNPC must be paid to the Godstone Parish Council.
45. A budget must be prepared that aims to set out all expenditure that is likely to be incurred in preparation of the Plan annually in advance. The overall budget must be approved by Godstone Parish Council, although individual budget items will be the responsibility of the GPNPC and not subject to Parish Council approval.
46. Requests for payments must be endorsed by the Treasurer and another Group member as decided by the GPNPC and submitted to Godstone Parish Council for payment, provided that such payment is within the approved budget and available funds.
47. The Parish Council may not veto or otherwise amend an expense to be incurred unless such payment can be deemed as unlawful, so long as it falls within the approved budget.
48. Any request of payment that has not formed part of the approved budget will require approval from Godstone Parish Council.
49. Accounts maintained by the Treasurer on behalf of the GPNPC must be presented to the committee for approval prior to their publication.
50. The GPNPC may receive donations, apply for grants and undertake fundraising events to cover the expenses incurred in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan.
51. The funds allocated to the GPNPC shall be applied only in furthering the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'Local Planning Authority' refers to the Tandridge District Council Local Planning Authority

<sup>2</sup> The term 'Area' in respect to this constitution references the Godstone Parish Council defined Neighbourhood Area Constitution of the Godstone Neighbourhood Planning Committee

52. In the event of a wind up of the GPNPC any monies or assets held by the Parish Council on behalf of the GPNPC will be distributed to local community-based organisations as determined by the Godstone Parish Council.

### **Removal of a Member from GPNPC**

53. If a member of the GPNPC, or any of its sub-committees, acts in a way that the Group determines is prejudicial to the best interests of the Group then the Group may remove the member from GPNPC membership by a motion put forward by one member and endorsed by any other two members, following which removal will be placed for a vote.

54. If a member is found to have an undeclared interest that may impact any aspect of the Plan, they will be automatically removed from the GPNPC.

55. Any individual or member organisation removed from the GPNPC shall have the right to be heard by the committee accompanied by a friend or colleague before the final decision is made.

### **Affiliations, Operations and Independence**

56. The GPNPC shall not be affiliated to any political party or organisation other than the Godstone Parish Council.

57. All members of the GPNPC shall act in in the best interests of the Group and the residents of the Area.

58. The GPNPC shall act in accordance with best practice in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans and in accordance with Government guidance for such preparation and shall seek to work collaboratively with the Local Planning Authority to achieve this.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'Local Planning Authority' refers to the Tandridge District Council Local Planning Authority

<sup>2</sup> The term 'Area' in respect to this constitution references the Godstone Parish Council defined Neighbourhood Area  
Constitution of the Godstone Neighbourhood Planning Committee