

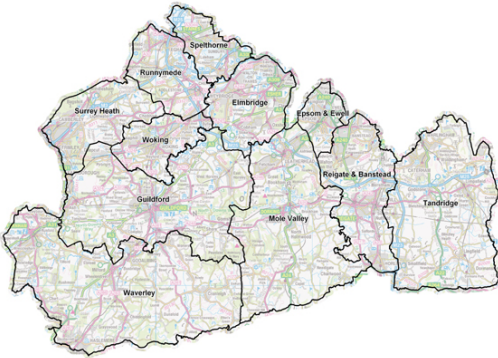
# Our Constitution

## Godalming & Villages Residents

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### 1. TITLE AND STATUS

- 1.1 The name of the party shall be Godalming & Villages Residents (hereafter referred to as "The Party"). The Party first came together as a national organisation in 2023.
- 1.2 The geographical area of "The Party" is the area covered by Surrey County Council and is referenced in the below map.



- 1.3 The constitution shall be kept up to date and publicly available on the website of the party - <https://godalmingresidents.co.uk>

### 2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 To encourage, endorse and support independent minded candidates who are dedicated to representing the interests and views of local residents and businesses with integrity and free of any party whip, in accordance with the principles of the party.
- 2.2 To provide a recognisable and respected democratic alternative to the established political parties, and to provide a distinct entity through which principled and independent minded candidates can benefit from the publicity, resources and organisation of like minded candidates and residents.

### 3. AIMS & VALUES

- 3.1 The aims of "The Party" are:
  - a) To ensure that the local government is cost efficient, honest and effective in its operations, and that it is able and enabled to deliver the best possible services to the community.

- b) To preserve and protect our area's natural environment and cultural heritage, while preserving rather than eradicating what makes it unique, in accordance with the principles of good design, cultural advancement, and the protection provided by international environmental law, and in harmony with the socioeconomic needs of the local community and future generations.
- c) To improve health, education, infrastructure and prosperity
- d) To ensure that all levels of council are attentive to the needs and perspectives of people and local businesses, and to prioritise the local community in all decisions.
- e) To fiercely support small businesses in the area and to expand and encourage the area's rich calendar of events and markets.

**3.2** "The Party" aims to achieve this by,

- a) Developing a framework in which local citizens' and companies' perspectives are heard and truthfully reflected, leveraging their expertise and talents for mutual benefit.
- b) Acting in accordance with the Nolan Principles of Public Life (Revised 2019)
- c) Collaborating to modify the systems of administration and introduce real "Localism," devolving decision-making to the most local level suited to the issue at hand, thereby giving the greatest possible independence to local communities.
- d) Being politically agnostic and separate from any of the national parties, composing ourselves from a diverse range of individuals, backgrounds and ideologies.

**3.3** To that end to win seats at the following councils and effect these aims

- a) Town & Parish Councils (within the borough of Waverley)
- b) Waverley Borough Council
- c) Surrey County Council

## **4. MEMBERSHIP**

**4.1** The Party is a political Party operating within the county of Surrey (laid out in section 1.2), open to all who share its objects and values and who undertake to be bound by this Constitution. The Party shall consist of its Members.

**4.2** Membership is open to any individual as long as they,

- a) Are individuals who live, work or operate businesses within the area of Godalming, its associated Villages and adjacent Parishes and Wards

- b) Are not a member of another political party
- c) Are aligned to the objectives, values and principles of the party
- d) A UK citizen or resident, who is registered to vote

**4.3** Membership of the party entitles members to vote on the business of the party.

**4.4** A list of all members will be maintained by the monitoring officer. Members must provide the Party with the details required by the Party to keep the Party Register complete and current.

**4.5** A member shall cease to be a member under any of the following circumstances,:

- a) Their written or verbal resignation is received by the Management Committee.
- b) Their membership is not renewed for 90 days after the renewal due date.
- c) They join another political party.
- d) They actively support a person standing against a Party candidate.
- e) They disagree with party policy expressed in a way and to an extent, or personal conduct, that seriously throws doubt on the person's support for the Aims and Values of the Party as set out in this Constitution.
- f) They fail to comply with Government legislation relating to political parties and elections.

**4.6** No member will be discriminated against due to gender, age, race, ethnicity, class, religion, disability, sexuality or marital status.

**4.7** The Nominating Officer, treasurer and Leader (Executive Committee) may respond to breaches of the Constitution and, if required, expel a member from the Party if, in the opinion of the entire Executive Committee, the member has undertaken activities or made statements that are not consistent with the objectives or principles of the Party.

**4.8** Members who intentionally undertake behavior or activities that are likely to bring the party into disrepute shall be considered a breach of the constitution and withdrawal of membership shall be considered by the Executive Committee.

**4.9** All members of the Party have the following rights which are to be respected and upheld by other members and the bodies functioning under this Constitution.

- a) to be offered equal opportunities to participate in the activities of the Party, and not to be excluded by unfair means;
- b) to attend and observe any Party AGM or EGM (subject to the payment of an entrance fee to cover costs of hiring facilities where necessary).

c) to have such details about themselves as may be held by the Party kept confidential and not disclosed publicly without their permission;

d) to be sent in good time any information about the Party and its activities which is available but not on a Party website, subject to payment of the reasonable costs of providing that information, but excluding membership lists and any other information which the Executive Committee declares to be confidential.

**4.10** Anyone whose membership is refused or revoked may appeal in writing to the Executive Committee which shall take reasonable steps to ascertain the full facts of the case and whose decision shall be final. A person whose membership has been refused or revoked may not apply for membership again until two years have passed.

## **5. LEADERSHIP & OFFICERS OF THE PARTY**

**5.1** "The Party" shall elect its Officers at its inaugural meeting and thereafter at each AGM. These shall include a:

- Party Leader
- Treasurer
- Nominating Officer

The Party Leader may also hold the post of Nominating Officer at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

**5.2** Nominations shall be proposed and seconded, and won by a simple majority vote. Any member can ask for a secret ballot.

**5.3** The inaugural meeting and AGM has the discretion not to fill posts if no suitable nominations are forthcoming or to propose the merging of posts or the creation of other posts with the agreement of a simple majority.

**5.4** Should any Officer fail to attend three consecutive meetings without good reason or apology, "The Party" may co-opt another person to act in their place.

**5.5** In the event of a vacancy an officer may be co-opted at the next Executive meeting pending election at the next Executive meeting.

**5.6** Members may only cast one vote in an election for the officers of the party.

**5.7** Elections shall be undertaken using Single Transferable Vote (STV) methodology.

**5.8** There shall be a general presumption of inclusion, sharing of workload and accountability in Party roles and decision making, with no member holding more than one internal Position unless uncontested.

**5.9** Elections and Appointments to all Party and Council Positions shall be subject to at least one week's advance Notice from the Secretary to all Members by email including voting arrangements, a description of the role and responsibilities and an Invitation to Stand as

applicable, and, if contested, to submit brief presentations in good time, with confidential ballots to be counted by two Members not standing for the contested Position.

## 6. MEETINGS AND DECISION MAKING

- 6.1** The business of "The Party" shall be decided and managed by meetings held monthly or at or such other times as members attending a meeting may decide upon, referred to hereafter as Party Meetings. Party Meetings shall be open to all members. Potential new members and supporters may attend by invitation, but except at the discretion of the meeting chair, have no right to speak.
- 6.2** Motions should be proposed and seconded, and will be carried by a simple majority vote of members present.
- 6.3** Members should be notified of any motions relating to policy at least one week before the meeting to discuss the issue.
- 6.4** Only members of "The Party" will be entitled to vote. Those unable to attend may make their views known to the Party Meeting, either in writing or through representation by another member, but only those in attendance will be entitled to vote.
- 6.5** The business meeting will be deemed to be in quorum if there are two or more members in attendance.
- 6.6** Attendance and business conducted at meetings shall be recorded in minutes to be approved by the next meeting.
- 6.7** A draft agenda will be circulated in advance of each Party Meeting, together with the minutes of the previous meeting. Anyone can suggest additional items for the agenda in advance of or at the start of the meeting.
- 6.8** In the event of a decision needing to be made before a Party Meeting, an emergency decision may be made by agreement of a simple majority of Officers of "The Party". This decision must be ratified by the next Party Meeting.
- 6.9** Working groups may be set up to discuss specific issues such as transport policy, literature updating etc. Any decision shall be ratified by the Party Meeting. All members can attend these groups.
- 6.10** Meetings may be attended virtually in exceptional circumstances, with advance notice, at the discretion of the Leader and subject to appropriate checks and balance

## 7. AGM & EGM

- 7.1** Every year between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 28<sup>th</sup> February an AGM shall be held for the purposes of:
- Election of the Executive and it's officers

- Presentation of Officer reports of work which has been carried out over the year
- Presentation of a financial statement for the year
- Reviewing strategy and setting goals for the following year and beyond.
- Any other business on the agenda

**7.2** The Leader shall act as Chairman of the AGM and any EGM.

**7.3** All members of "The Party" who are present have one vote each, and resolutions must have the support of a simple majority.

**7.4** Notice of the AGM shall be given at least one month prior to the meeting and any motions for consideration shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

**7.5** The Agenda will be circulated in advance at least one week prior to the meeting.

**7.6** The Chair has the right to rule on the admissibility of any emergency motions put forward.

**7.7** The quorum of an AGM shall be 25% of members of "The Party" (whichever is the smaller).

**7.8** An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on a particular agenda may be called on the request of the monthly meeting or at least five members of "The Party". The same general rules apply to EGM's as to AGM's.

**7.9** All members of the Party are entitled to attend the AGM or EGM, subject to payment of a registration fee to cover administration and venue costs.

**7.10** An Extraordinary General Meeting can be called by the Executive Chairman or by the Treasurer or by written request of two-thirds of the Committee Members in order to address significant issues and/or proposed changes to the Constitution. At an EGM no business can be taken unless it has been specified in the calling notice for the meeting.

## **8. FINANCE & FINANCIAL SCHEME**

**8.1** The finances of the Party are the responsibility of the Executive Committee who will elect a Treasurer who must keep a proper set of books and who has overall responsibility for the drawing and paying of monies and for all monetary transactions.

**8.2** The Party shall maintain a financial scheme approved by the Electoral Commission and shall consist of a central organisation with no separate accounting units.

**8.3** The financial scheme shall be kept up to date and publicly available on the website of the party - <https://godalmingresidents.co.uk>

**8.4** The Treasurer shall collect or arrange the collection of all money due to "The Party" and shall receive all donations to "The Party" and shall be the custodian thereof.

- 8.5** The Treasurer will arrange payment of any bills incurred by "The Party", and will notify the group if it is in danger of becoming overdrawn.
- 8.6** All monies drawn from "The Party"'s bank account shall be signed by two authorized persons from a list of three, to be agreed at the AGM.
- 8.7** Wherever possible, funds will be held by a banking organisation with a policy of ethical investment acceptable to the membership (such as Triodos, Cooperative Bank, Ecological Building Society).
- 8.8** Any affiliation fees to another organisation or donations to another group must have the approval of a party meeting. "The Party" will not make donations to other groups or organisations outside of "the Party".
- 8.9** This constitution specifically prohibits the Party from borrowing money, secured or unsecured, by way of overdraft or loan, other than distinct short-term loans by Officers or Executive Committee Members of less than £200 in total, any or all of which shall be repaid within six months.
- 8.10** At the end of each financial year, the Party's accounts are to be produced, subjected to audit if necessary and submitted to the Electoral Commission in accordance with PPERA. If an Audit is required the Auditor must be appointed by the Executive Committee.

## **9. SELECTION OF ELECTION CANDIDATES**

- 9.1** For selection of candidates, arrangements will be agreed at a Party Meeting of the "The Party" with the provision that all candidates are agreed at a Party Meeting with the nominating officer having casting vote in case of disagreement.
- 9.2** All Party candidates at any election must be paid up members of the Party.
- 9.3** No Party candidate at any election can be a member of a rival political party.
- 9.4** The Nominating Office shall maintain a list of approved candidates for elections. The Executive Committee shall also establish, and periodically review, the rules for approving candidates.
- 9.5** All members of the Party may apply to become approved candidates, but no member can become an approved candidate until they have been approved under the rules established by the Executive Committee. No member may describe themselves as a candidate, or prospective candidate, unless they have been properly approved.
- 9.6** All Party candidates have the duty to promote the Aims and Values of the Party, as set out in this Constitution.
- 9.7** Because of their public status, Party candidates in all elections have a special duty not to do or say anything that may bring the Party into disrepute, a duty which, if they are elected, continues throughout their time in office.

## 10. ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 10.1** The day-to-day running of the Party will be conducted by the Officers and Committee by holding Executive Committee Meetings throughout the year, as and when deemed necessary by Officers or requested by Committee Members, at the discretion of the Party Leader, the request for a Meeting not to be unreasonably withheld. The Party Leader or Secretary will inform other Officers and Committee Members of the time and place of the next Committee Meeting by email, at least 14 days in advance of the Meeting.
- 10.2** The quorum for an Executive meeting shall be at least half of the Committee Members. Decisions will be made by simple majority by show of hands, with the Party Leader having a casting vote in the event of a tied vote.
- 10.3** The Executive Committee shall consist of the Party Leader, Treasurer and Secretary plus up to 12 (twelve) other members elected at the AGM, and shall elect an Executive Chairman annually at its first meeting following the AGM. The Party Leader shall act as Chairperson of AGM and EGM.
- 10.4** The Executive Committee may appoint Members of the Committee to Officer post, including Secretary, Deputy Leader, Deputy Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Campaigns Manager etc as deemed necessary. In the absence of such Officers or positions the Party Leader will assume those responsibilities, except that of Treasurer. In the event of the Treasurer resigning, the Party Leader is responsible for that position in accordance with PPERA until a new Treasurer is appointed.
- 10.5** The Executive Committee directs the work of the Party, and is responsible for implementing the Party's Aims. In particular, the Executive Committee shall:
- a) Be responsible for the organisation and finances of the Party;
  - b) Determine Party priorities and expenditure in supporting election candidates, campaigns and publicity,
  - c) Initiate and progress campaigns and political action;
  - d) Develop and review the Party's AGM and EGM Standing Orders;
  - e) Receive regular reports on the Party's finances from the Treasurer;
  - f) Propose any changes to membership subscriptions to AGM.
  - g) Undertake fundraising activities and/or bids for grants etc. as may be deemed necessary to support the purpose and aims of the Party.



## **11. AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION**

This constitution can only be altered by an EGM of "The Party". Amendments to this constitution require advance notice.

- 11.1** Amendments may only be made by a two-thirds majority at a Quorate General Meeting. No amendment shall be made which conflicts with the Constitution of the Party.
- 11.2** Details of any proposed amendment shall be sent to all members with the notice of the General Meeting

## **12. WINDING UP**

- 12.1** The Party may only be dissolved if a proposal to that effect is passed by both:
  - a) a three-quarters majority at a properly convened AGM or EGM; and subsequently
  - b) a four-fifths majority in an email ballot of the membership, provided that at least half of the entire membership vote in favor of the dissolution.
- 12.2** The email ballot provided for in clause 12.1 must be completed within three months of the success of a dissolution motion at an AGM or EGM. Any proposal to dissolve the Party must incorporate proposals for the disposal of the assets and records of the Party.
- 12.3** Section 12 of the Constitution may only be amended by a three-quarters majority at an AGM, followed by a four-fifths majority in an email ballot of the membership, provided that at least half of the entire membership votes in favor of the amendment.


**13. ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION**

This constitution was adopted by the members present at the AGM held on:

**Date** 18th January 2023

**Party Leader**

**Printed Name** Karen Lankester

**Signed**  .....


**Treasurer**

**Printed Name** Adam Clark

**Signed**  .....

**Nominating Officer**

**Printed Name** Karen Lankester

**Signed**  .....