

# The Heart of England Hedge Laying Group Constitution

## 1. Name

The name of The Group shall be **The Heart of England Hedge Laying Group**, hereinafter referred to as 'The Group'

## 2. Aims

The aims of The Group will be to:

- Raise awareness of the reasons for laying hedges and their benefits to the environment.
- Help and support professional hedge layers who work under local styles (Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire and Midland Bullock) as well as supporting new and advancing hedge layers.
- Provide training opportunities for anyone interested in our styles and other forms of hedgerow maintenance.
- Build strong links with other organisations.
- Document our findings to form an archive to preserve knowledge for future generations of hedge layers.
- Provide advice on hedgerow management.

## 3. Membership

Membership is open to anyone who:

- Has an interest in hedge laying, either as a professional or amateur and
- supports the aims of The Group.

Membership will begin as soon as the membership form and first annual payment has been received. Membership will run from September 1<sup>st</sup> until the following August 31<sup>st</sup> after which a new subscription will be due.

There will be an annual membership fee which will be agreed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and will be payable by all members during September.

A list of all members will be kept by the secretary.

### 3.1 Ceasing to be a member

Members may resign at any time in writing to the secretary.

Any member who has not paid their membership fee for one year will be contacted by the committee, who will then decide whether that member is deemed to have resigned.

Any offensive behaviour, including racist, sexist or inflammatory remarks, will not be permitted. Anyone behaving in an offensive way or breaking the equal opportunities policy may be asked not to attend further meetings or to resign from The Group if an apology is not given or the behaviour is repeated. The individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by the committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

## 4. Equal Opportunities

The Group will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, disability, religious or political belief, marital status or age.

## 5. Officers and committee

The business of The Group will be carried out by a Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Committee will meet as necessary and not less than four times a year.

The Committee will be composed of 4 officers and up to 6 other members.

The officers' roles are as follows:

- Chair, who shall chair both general and committee meetings
- Secretary, who shall be responsible for the taking of minutes and the distribution of all papers
- Treasurer who shall be responsible for maintaining accounts
- President

Officers will be elected by members at the AGM and generally be elected for three years. Initially the post of Chair and two other committee members will be for 1 year and the post of Secretary and one other committee member will be for 2 years. This will promote staggered changes to the committee. Election will be by simple majority.

Other committee members will be appointed at the AGM by agreement or simple majority in a vote if necessary. Up to two additional committee members may be co-opted by the committee at any time.

In the event of an officer or other committee member standing down during the year a replacement will be elected by the next General Meeting of members. Where a post is filled mid-term it shall just run for the remainder of the three year period.

Any committee member not attending a meeting without apology for three scheduled meetings will be contacted by the committee and asked if they wish to resign.

## 6. Meetings

### 6.1. Annual General Meetings

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held within fifteen months of the previous AGM. The secretary will arrange a venue and ensure that there is adequate parking available.

All members will be notified in writing by the secretary at least 3 weeks before the date of the meeting, giving the venue, date and time. Members may submit proposals for consideration at the AGM, these to be delivered to the Secretary at least one week prior to the date of the AGM.

Nominations for the committee should be made to the Secretary before the meeting, or at the meeting. The agreement of the Nominee should be sought before nomination. All Nominees should be members of the Group.

The quorum for the AGM will be 10% of the membership or 10 members, whichever is the greater number.

At the AGM:-

- The Committee will present a report of the work of The Group over the year.
- The Treasurer will present the accounts of The Group for the previous year.
- The officers and Committee for the next year will be elected.
- Any proposals given to the Secretary at least 7 days in advance of the meeting will be discussed.

### 6.2 Special General Meetings

The Secretary will call a Special General Meeting at the request of the majority of the committee or at least eight other members giving a written request to the Chair or Secretary stating the reason for their request.

The meeting will take place within twenty-eight days of the request.

All members will be given two weeks notice of such a meeting, giving the venue, date, time and agenda, and notice may be by telephone, email or post.

The quorum for the Special General Meeting will be 10% of the membership or 10 members, whichever is the greater number.

### 6.3 General Meetings

General Meetings are open to all members and will be held at least once a year in addition to the AGM.

All members will be given two weeks' notice of such a meeting, giving the venue, date, time and agenda, and notice may be by telephone, email or post.

The quorum for a General Meeting shall be 10% of the membership or 5 members, whichever is the greater number.

## 6.4 Committee Meetings

Committee meetings may be called by the Chair or Secretary. Committee members must receive notice of meetings at least 7 days before the meeting.

The quorum for Committee meetings is three Committee members.

## 7. Rules of Procedure for meetings

All questions that arise at any meeting will be discussed openly and the meeting will seek to find general agreement.

If a consensus cannot be reached a vote will be taken and a decision will be made by a simple majority of members present. If the number of votes cast on each side is equal, the chair of the meeting shall have an additional casting vote.

## 8. Finances

An account will be maintained on behalf of the Association at a bank agreed by the committee. Two cheque signatories will be nominated by the Committee (one to be the Treasurer). The signatories must not be related nor members of the same household.

All payments will be signed by two of the signatories.

- For cheque payments, the signatories will sign the cheque.
- For other payments (such as BACS payments, cash withdrawals, debit card payments or cash payments), a requisition note will be signed by two signatories, and held by the treasurer.

Records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given at each AGM.

All money raised by or on behalf of The Group is only to be used to further the aims of The Group, as specified in item 2 of this constitution.

## 9. Amendments to the Constitution

Amendments to the constitution may only be made at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.

Any proposal to amend the constitution must be given to the Secretary in writing at least one month before the AGM or SGM. This will then be discussed by the Committee and a proposal (possibly amended) will be made at the AGM or SGM by the Committee. This proposal must then be circulated prior to the meeting.

Any proposal to amend the constitution will require a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.

## 10. Dissolution

If a meeting, by simple majority, decides that it is necessary to close down The Group it may call a Special General Meeting to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve The Group .

If it is agreed to dissolve The Group , all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid, will be donated to a local charitable organisation. The organisation will be agreed at the meeting which agrees the dissolution.

This constitution was agreed at the General Meeting of the Group on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Signed .....

Name and position in group .....

Signed .....

Name and position in group .....