

# **Chinbrook Meadows Horticultrual Society**

## **Constitution**

1. The name of the Society shall be “Chinbrook Meadows Horticultrual Society”. Each person holding a current tenancy agreement of a plot at the Chinbrook Meadows allotment site, Marvels Lane, Lewisham shall be a member of the Society.
2. The object of the Society shall be the encouragement of the cultivation of the allotments and management of the Chinbrook Meadows allotment site.
3. The Officers of the society shall be the Chair, the Secretary and the Treasurer and they shall be ex-officio members of the Committee. The Officers and Committee Members shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting, and each must be proposed and seconded by another member of the Society. Retiring Officers shall be eligible for re-election but no individual may be elected to more than one position at the same time.
4. A member of the Society may exercise their right to propose or second a member as an Officer or a Committee Member in writing. Officers and Committee Members may be elected, with their prior written consent, in their absence. The affairs of the Society shall be managed by the Committee comprised of the three Officers and at least two other Members, of which any four shall form a quorum. The Committee shall meet at least four times a year.

## **THE COMMITTEE**

5. The Committee shall have the power to:
  - a) fill Officer and Committee Members vacancies which may occur between Annual General Meetings;
  - b) use a banking account in the name of the Association and all monies received from any source on behalf of the Association shall be paid into such account. Two out of three signatories to the account shall sign cheques.
  - c) allocate vacant plots, and in doing so give precedence to
    - i. any member in good standing who at present has a 2.5 rod plot and wants a larger one
    - ii. any ex-member who has left in the last 2 years and who was in good standing when they left
    - iii. any member who wants to transfer to a smaller plot
    - iv. any member in good standing who wants to take an additional plot up to a maximum holding of 140m squared in total (equivalent to 5 rods by 5 rods). (This section applicable only from 27th May 2017 and does not apply retrospectively).
    - v. anyone on the Council waiting list, in sequence.
  - d) terminate the membership of any member whose conduct is proved, to the Committee’s satisfaction, to be detrimental to the interests of another member or who has failed to maintained their plot for three

months. The decision to terminate membership shall be given in writing by the Secretary and the member may appeal against the decision in writing.

- e) call an Extraordinary General Meeting when a member who has been notified that their membership has been terminated makes an appeal in writing to the Secretary asking for such a meeting; or when there are less than 5 extant Committee members; or less than 3 extant Officers; or when requested in writing by any Officer or by eight or more members.
- f) appoint an auditor, who is not an Officer nor a Committee Member.
- g) at their discretion, require the annual rent to be paid in two payments each covering a period of six months
- h) award “honorable memberships” to ex members at their discretion when the member retires from holding an allotment on the site.
- i) when emergency funds are needed for an unforeseen bill, use the reserve and then replenish the reserve by levying (with 8 weeks' notice) an additional rent charge of not more than £5 per rod (minus such reduction as is in force for those members who qualify for a reduced rent)
- j) use their discretion to deal with any matter not provided for in this Constitution.

## MEMBERS

6. Members shall have the power to:

- a) speak and vote at the Annual General Meeting and any Extraordinary General Meeting.
- b) ask the Secretary to call an Extraordinary General Meeting.
- c) propose changes to this Constitution at the Annual General Meeting and any Extraordinary General Meeting.
- d) propose and second members to be Officers or Committee Members.
- e) exercise their right to propose or second a member in writing, or to give their prior written consent for their own election in their absence, by writing to the Chair or Secretary.

## CONDUCT OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS (AGM) AND EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS (EGM)

7. The Annual General Meeting will be held once each year.

8. Each Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting will be conducted in accordance with an agenda circulated to members by the Chair at least 14 days before the meeting. The Chair will conduct the meeting, or in their absence, the Secretary will conduct the meeting and eight members of the Society shall form a quorum.

9. Each member, including Officers and Committee Members, will have one vote and the decision of the majority shall stand. The Chair will have an additional casting

vote only where no majority of members can be established. The Officers and Committee Members shall retire at each Annual General Meeting but shall be eligible for re-election.

10. The Annual General Meeting agenda will include:

- a) presentation by the Chair of the minutes of the previous AGM, for agreement or correction.
- b) presentation of the audited accounts by the Treasurer.
- c) a report on the Society and the site by the Secretary.
- d) election of Officers and Committee Members.
- e) any other business.

## GENERAL RULES

11. No plot shall be sub-let. No plot shall be jointly held by more than two people. Members shall maintain their plots in a reasonable state of cultivation except where the Committee exercises its discretion e.g. illness or personal crisis.

12. The use of hose pipes is forbidden. No building shall be erected on any plot. No fencing or water supply shall be removed or altered without the consent of the Committee.

13. Each member must maintain a path on each edge, and adjacent to their plot, in good order to the width of at least nine inches. Thus all paths between or around plots shall be at least eighteen inches wide. Each member must keep the paths adjacent to their plot in a good order and free of obstructions and hazards. Plots adjacent to the perimeter fence of the site shall keep a path clear to the fence of at least eighteen inches.

14. Children shall be accompanied and supervised at all times by an adult member of the Society.

15. Dogs shall be accompanied and controlled by an adult member of the Society, and kept on a lead, at all times.

16. No Polytunnel or plastic covered structure over 4 feet tall will be allowed on any plot and no structure of any kind should be built that would prevent the committee from having full access to a plot.

17. The gates to the site shall remain locked at all times unless a member is present at the gate.

18. We allow bee-keepers, who are licensed by Lewisham Council, to keep hives only in a designated area of the orchard.

19. Members hold their plot subject to this constitution. Any contravention of this constitution may render a member liable to dispossession without compensation,

subject to 28 days written notice and subject to the right of appeal at paragraph 5e above.

19. Any notice may be served to a Member by email so long as the Society holds an email address supplied by that Member.

## PURPOSE

20. The purpose of the Chinbrook Meadows Horticultural Society allotments site is to provide for:

- i. Gardening: cultivating flowers, fruit and vegetables solely for the consumption of family and friends.
- ii. Social Capital: to ameliorate loneliness and enable citizens to contribute to society, plot-holders are part of a community of like-minded people.
- iii. Mental well-being: gardening plays a role in both preventing and alleviating mental ill-health.
- iv. Physical activity: helping plot-holders to keep fit.
- v. Fresh, local, seasonal produce: giving access to fresh fruit and vegetables over the year.
- vi. Sense of achievement: growing vegetables requires acquiring new knowledge and skills.
- vii. Contact with nature: experiencing the seasons, witnessing the behaviour of birds, insects and other animals and gaining an understanding of the eco-system. This appreciation of the natural world also has the potential to inspire more environmentally aware behaviour by individuals.
- viii. Provide habitats for local species: protecting and improving existing habitats, particularly the orchard which is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, to allow biodiversity to thrive, which will also benefit site users.”

21. This constitution may only be altered by a majority vote at Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting<sup>1</sup>.

Chair  
Margaret Leharne

Secretary  
Sharon Foster-King

Treasurer  
Rob Tomlinson

Committee member  
Simon Kerry

Committee member  
Chris Foster-King

This constitution agreed at the AGM on 25th February 2012.

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## AMENDMENTS

1. Amended by unanimous agreement of all Officers and Committee Members of the Society at the Committee Meeting on 7th July 2012 to limit future amendments to General Meetings of members only by:

Chair Sharon Foster-King, Secretary Tracey Hopkins, Treasurer Rob Tomlinson and Committee Members Jan Fish, Chris Foster-King, Paul Lee, Maggie Leharne, Edith Eneanya-Bonito, Simon Kerry and Tony Pesci.

Confirmed at the May 2013 AGM to limit future amendments to General Meetings of members.

2. Amended by April 2013 AGM, removed “5 c) allocate vacant plots, and in doing so give precedence to
  - i. any member in good standing who at present has a 2.5 rod plot and wants a larger one
  - ii. any ex-member who has left in the last 2 years and who was in good standing when they left
  - iii. any other member who wants to transfer to a smaller plot or to another of the same size
  - iv. anyone on the Council waiting list, in sequence.
  - v. if there is nobody on the waiting list, existing members may apply for an additional plot.”

And replaced with current text.

3. Amended May 2015 AGM, removed clause “16. Plot rents due in April, shall be paid to the Treasurer no later than 1st March each year. The Treasurer shall report to the Secretary any plot holder who has not paid their rent by 1st March, and the Secretary will issue to that member a notice to quit the plot by 31st March if the rent is not paid before 31st March.” Agreed to rely on tenancy agreement clause instead.
4. Amended May 2015 AGM, inserted clause 5. i) “when emergency funds are needed for an unforeseen bill, use the reserve and then replenish the reserve by levying (with 8 weeks' notice) an additional rent charge of not more than £5 per rod (minus such reduction as is in force for those members who qualify for a reduced rent).”
5. Amended 2016 AGM, inserted clause 16 “No Polytunnel or plastic covered structure over 4 feet tall will be allowed on any plot and no structure of any kind should be built that would prevent the committee from having full access to a plot.”
6. Amended by May 2017 AGM, section 5 iv) removed “any member in good standing who wants to take an additional plot up to a maximum holding of 10 rods or 2 plots” and replaced with current text.

7. Amended 7 May 2022 AGM to add “Any notice may be served to a Member by email so long as the Society holds an email address supplied by that Member.”
8. Amended 20 May 2023 AGM to add “We allow bee-keepers, who are licensed by Lewisham Council, to keep hives only in a designated area of the orchard.” and to add “The purpose of the Chinbrook Meadows Horticultural Society allotments site is to provide for:
  - ix. Gardening: cultivating flowers, fruit and vegetables solely for the consumption of family and friends.
  - x. Social Capital: to ameliorate loneliness and enable citizens to contribute to society, plot-holders are part of a community of like-minded people.
  - xi. Mental well-being: gardening plays a role in both preventing and alleviating mental ill-health.
  - xii. Physical activity: helping plot-holders to keep fit.
  - xiii. Fresh, local, seasonal produce: giving access to fresh fruit and vegetables over the year.
  - xiv. Sense of achievement: growing vegetables requires acquiring new knowledge and skills.
  - xv. Contact with nature: experiencing the seasons, witnessing the behaviour of birds, insects and other animals and gaining an understanding of the eco-system. This appreciation of the natural world also has the potential to inspire more environmentally aware behaviour by individuals.
  - xvi. Provide habitats for local species: protecting and improving existing habitats, particularly the orchard which is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, to allow biodiversity to thrive, which will also benefit site users.”