

# DEVON FOSTER CARERS' ASSOCIATION



## CONSTITUTION

### 1. NAME

This Foster Care Association shall be known as

### **DEVON FOSTER CARER'S ASSOCIATION**

### 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To offer mutual support to for foster carers.
2. To promote good working partnerships between foster carers and the local authority
3. To develop awareness, knowledge and skills
4. To encourage and help foster carers to work well with professionals
5. To represent foster carers as a group
6. To create opportunities for children, young people and foster carers to meet together
7. To promote communication and understanding between carers and others involved in fostering in Devon.

### 4. OFFICERS

- The officers will be the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.
- Officers will be chosen at the annual general meeting.
- Only an officer can vote.
- Only members can be officers.
- Officers will be elected for no more than a period of three years.
- Officers can be re-elected for two consecutive three-year terms but must then stand down for at least one year.

The above shall be elected by the committee members following an AGM in

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accordance with the constitution of the Network. The positions can be held for a maximum of 4 consecutive years after which the officer/s must stand down for a period of 12 months, unless a replacement for that role has not been filled, entitling the outgoing officer to carry on in post until a candidate can be found at the next AGM.

## 5. COMMITTEE

- Members must elect at least three members to help run the group. These people and the officers will be the Committee. No more than one adult from any fostering household may be on the Committee at any one time.
- The Committee shall meet at least four times each year.
- There must be at least four people, including at least two officers at each meeting. If there are less than four people, the meeting is not quorate and no decisions can be made.

The Committee will;

- run the group fairly and do what is best for its members.
- keep an accurate record of the group's money,
- hold a bank account, for which each cheque must be signed by at least two of the officers of the group,
- bring accounts to the annual general meeting so that members can see how the money has been spent and how much money is in the bank account,
- make decisions for the benefit of the membership. To make a decision, at least half of the committee members at the meeting must vote 'yes'. The Chair holds the casting vote.
- Must keep an accurate record of Minutes / Notes of Group decisions

The Committee may, if necessary, co-opt additional members until the next annual general meeting.

## 6. The Annual General Meeting

There will be an annual general meeting for all members. There must be less than 15 months between annual general meetings.

Members will be notified of the meeting at least three weeks beforehand by letter or email.

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Members must inform the secretary at least two weeks before the meeting if they want the AGM to vote on any matter.

The secretary will inform members at least one week before the meeting what items will be on the agenda.

The AGM will;

- agree the Minutes of last year's AGM and any general meetings held since then,
- look at the accounts and listen to the treasurers report,
- listen to the secretary's report about what the group had done,
- vote for the chair, secretary, treasurer and other committee members,
- decide what any annual subscription will be

Nominations for officers or committee members must be given to the secretary in writing at least two weeks before the AGM. Nominations must be signed by the person nominated, a proposer and a seconder.

If no, or insufficient, nominations are received, the meeting may vote to accept nominations at the meeting itself. Only people present at the meeting can be nominated.

## 7. OTHER GENERAL MEETINGS

If at least four members, or the committee, calls for a meeting, a meeting will be convened. Members will be told and given the agenda at least three weeks before the meeting by letter or email. Where it is necessary to call a meeting in an emergency (i.e. Extra-Ordinary Meeting) an agenda should be sent out to all relevant parties as soon as possible and explanation why the Committee was not able to follow normal protocol should be recorded on the Minutes.

All meetings are chaired by the Chair. If the chair is unavailable, the members may choose who will chair the meeting.

The meeting can only make decisions about things specified on the agenda.

There must be a minimum of four (4) of the members at the general meeting, including at least one from the chair, the secretary and the treasurer, or the meeting will not count and no decision can be made. A show of hands will decide the vote.

Decisions will be agreed by a simple majority, voted by a show of hands, or by proxy, at meetings, and the AGM.

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## 8. FINANCES

- a) The group may raise funds by obtaining grants from other bodies or by other agreed fundraising schemes. All money raised by or on behalf of the group shall be applied to further its objectives.
- b) All funds shall be kept in a bank account held in the name of Devon Foster Carers Association
- c) The Chairperson /Treasurer / Secretary shall be the two signatories on the account and all cheques shall require both of these signatures.
- d) Accounts shall be kept by the Treasurer, and brought to every Committee meeting where they may be inspected. Failure to bring the books to a meeting on three consecutive occasions will mean the Treasurer may be asked to resign.
- e) All expenditure shall be agreed and controlled by the Committee.

## 9. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

If at least four members want to change this Constitution they must inform the secretary in writing, by letter or email. The secretary will call a general meeting and inform the members of the requested change.

The meeting must have a minimum of four (4) of the membership and at least one officer. At least two thirds of the membership present at the meeting must agree to vote for the change or no change will be made.

## 10. CONFIDENTIALITY CLAUSE

While this Association shall exist to support foster carers in their role of caring for the children that are placed with them, members accept that any information shared by them, in whatever form, (i.e. written, verbal or electronic), about any child they are looking after, or have looked after or who is or who has been placed with a foster carer, is to be treated as confidential.

The identity of foster children shall be kept confidential and all members agree to keep personal information that could lead to the identity of children being known, to a minimum.

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No matter concerning a fostered child should be discussed in a public place under any circumstances whatsoever.

## 11. DISSOLUTION

To dissolve the group, a special general meeting must be held. The agenda will refer only to the dissolving of the group and the secretary will inform the membership that the meeting will vote on whether to dissolve.

Dissolution of this Association can only take place if at least two thirds of the membership present at the meeting votes to dissolve.

Any member wishing to vote who is unable to attend personally may provide the secretary with their written vote at least one week before the meeting.

Any money or property held by the group at dissolution must be passed to another voluntary group with similar aims and objectives. Nominations for such groups can be handed to the secretary and, in the case where more than one nomination is received; a vote by way of a show of hands will be taken

## 12. AUTHORISATION

This Constitution was approved by a majority of the membership at a general meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

Signed.....*P. Bagshaw*.....Chair

Signed.....*Leigh Strange*..... Secretary

Date.....*27<sup>th</sup> June 2016*.....

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