

**Constitution of The Vision Group for Sidmouth, formed in 2005,  
amended in May 2019, adopted 7th June 2019**

**1) Type of Association**

The VGS is a voluntary, cooperative, unincorporated, not-for-profit, secular, non-party association.

**2) The aims and principles of The Vision Group for Sidmouth (VGS)**

**a)** The aims of the VGS are

- i) to stimulate informed debate;
- ii) to provide a supportive structure where people can develop projects of a high quality;
- iii) to develop creative ideas about how to build the future.

The VGS exists to provide a means for residents of the Sid Valley to start and to continue community related projects and activities that fit within the aims and principles of the VGS.

The VGS wishes to encourage the people of the Sid Valley in making moves towards a society and economy based on the ideals of 'sustainable development'. "*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*" (Brundtland Report 1987)

**b)** The VGS principles are

- i) to work sustainably, transparently, and inclusively;
- ii) to respect resource limits;
- iii) to freely share ideas.

**c)** The only views and opinions of the VGS are those stated on the website.

**3) Powers of the VGS**

The group, through its Officers only, has the powers to enter into contracts so long as such contracts contain a provision stating that the liability of Officers entering into any contract for the VGS and the liability of any participants in the VGS on whose behalf the contract is made is limited to the assets of the association.

It may also:

- a)** raise funds and apply for, invite, obtain, collect and receive contributions, grants, subscriptions, fees & otherwise;
- b)** employ any paid worker to assist in the attainment of the aims of the group;
- c)** rent or own equipment necessary to achieve the aims;
- d)** affiliate to any local or national group or association that the Officers and Coordination Group decides is appropriate; and disaffiliate from any group or organisation if continued affiliation be, in their view, against the interests of the group;
- e)** do all such other lawful things as shall further the attainment of the aims.

**4) Sub-groups**

**a)** The VGS's work is undertaken by sub-groups and individuals who focus on a particular issue for action, research, awareness-raising, participative planning and decision-making, discussion, or other activity which falls under the purpose of the VGS.

**b)** Although such sub-groups can work autonomously and form their own management structures they are never-the-less integral parts of the Vision Group for Sidmouth organisation.

Sub-groups provide and receive mutual support and advice through the structure of the VGS, and are covered by VGS insurance as detailed on the website

<https://visionforsidmouth.org/insurance-policy/>

**c)** Sub-groups may, if they wish, choose to adopt the Constitution of the VGS as their own by making a simple statement containing the following points:

- i) Their name;
- ii) That they replace section 2 a) with a statement of their own particular Aims;
- iii) That every reference to the VGS in this Constitution shall be understood to also apply to the name of their sub-group, saving only those referring to specific inclusions, provisions or arrangements clearly pertaining only to an over-group;
- iv) That references to the Coordination Group shall not apply;

Or they may establish their own limited constitution within the broad boundaries of the VGS principles, subject to the approval of the VGS Officers.

**d)** Sub-groups may affiliate to networks or organisations with similar aims;

**e)** Sub-groups, including individual members, may not enter into any contracts of any kind which purport to bind the VGS or its Officers, members or subscribers.

## **5) Membership of the VGS**

Anybody in the Sid Valley, or with an interest in Sidmouth, can become a participant in the VGS by adding their name and contact details to the VGS mailing list, and can withdraw by removing their name at any time.

There are no additional membership requirements nor fee for becoming a participant in the VGS.

Participation falls into a range of categories depending on how active you are in the group.

**a) Officers.** These are elected to deal with the day to day running of the VGS.

**b) Coordination Group.** Composed of representatives from the various sub-groups within the VGS. Members may also be co-opted to attain a greater balance of viewpoint.

**c) Members.** Those actively involved in the above mentioned sub-groups.

**d) Subscribers.** Those who are on the mailing list but not currently actively involved.

The VGS does not endorse any political party or political campaign and is not affiliated to any sectarian or religious organisation.

No person may hold or stand for political office, or engage in political campaigns, in a role as a Officer or member of the VGS: nor may they claim to represent the views of the VGS unless they are repeating views expressed on the VGS website only. Doing so will result in such an individual being barred/expelled from the VGS.

Participation in the VGS will also be withdrawn from anyone who, by their words or actions, may bring it into disrepute. Anyone who is so disbarred or expelled shall have the right of appeal to a board constituted from the Officers and members of the Coordination Group.

These restrictions and consequences apply to sub-groups as well as to individuals.

## **6) Management**

The direction of VGS is determined by the Officers, members and subscribers who take part in any of the formal meetings. The Officers of the VGS are responsible for implementing any decisions about direction, and necessary expenditure, where feasible and taking in to account VGS resources as a whole.

**a)** The elected Officers of the VGS provide day to day management. They are supported by, but are independent of, the Coordination Group.

A formal General Meeting approves any interim appointment of these Officers, who must be elected on an annual basis at the AGM. Officers may stand for re-election.

The VGS may have the following elected roles:

Chair (normally a rotating position selected from within the Officers or Coordination Group on a short term 'at need' basis but may be a formal elected post if required),

Treasurer,

Secretary,

Publicity Officer,

Webmaster.

These positions may be amalgamated or expanded in response to the workload at any time, as is deemed appropriate. These changed arrangements shall be ratified by a simple majority vote at the next general meeting.

**b)** The Coordination Group is formed of representatives from all VGS sub-groups. Additional members can be co-opted onto the Coordination Group if agreed by the current members, and will remain as members of the Group until the next Annual General Meeting. These co-opted members may only continue after then as members of the Coordination Group if a simple majority of those present at the AGM vote for them to do so. All members of the Coordination Group shall be recorded on the website.

The Coordination Group responsibilities include coordinating VGS projects and activities, and liaison with other organisations.

## **7) Meetings**

Meetings may be held in person or by electronic means, or by any other means deemed appropriate, provided that equality of ability to attend in taken into consideration.

### **a) Formal meetings**

i) Formal meetings of the Officers and Coordination Group will be held at least once a year, in addition to the Annual General Meeting. Other Coordination Group meetings, and Officers

meetings, shall be held as necessary and may take place electronically.

ii) At least 7 days notice of a meeting will be given to all participants in the VGS by email newsletter.

iii) If the current elected Officers do not include a Chair and/or Secretary then the Meeting Chairperson and Secretary will be agreed by the Officers and Coordination Group before each formal meeting, it is then their responsibility to organise an agenda and record minutes respectively.

### **b) Annual General Meeting**

i) The Annual General Meeting of the group shall be held once a year. This shall be held not more than fifteen months after the date of the preceding AGM.

ii) The purpose of the Annual General Meeting is to

- receive and adopt the Annual Accounts;
- receive Annual Reports from the Officers and Sub-groups;
- elect the Officers;
- consider any other motion put before the meeting. Motions should (if possible ) be notified to the Officers at least 14 days in advance so that they may be placed on the agenda.

### **c) Special/Emergency General Meetings**

i) Special/Emergency General Meetings may be called by the Officers whenever they feel it is necessary for the organisation, and all members will have at least 7 days email notice of the meeting. The notice of the meeting shall give details of the business to be discussed at the meeting.

ii) The secretary shall call a Special General Meeting within 21 days of receiving a written request to do so signed by no less than 30 participants in the VGS. The notice of the meeting shall give details of the business to be discussed at the meeting.

iii) Only the business specified in the notice for the meeting shall be discussed at the Special/Emergency meeting.

### **d) Rules of proceedings at all meetings**

i) The Quorum (the minimum number of attendees needed for a meeting to go ahead) shall number at:

- a general meeting (including the Annual General Meeting) 5 persons, including at least one Officer.

- an Officers and Coordination Group meeting 3 persons including at least one Officer.

ii) All decisions at any meeting shall be reached by consensus or failing that by a more than two-thirds majority: in the event of a tie the Chair shall have a casting vote (a second vote). Should a two-thirds majority not be attained by any side then an email poll of participants shall take place and this poll shall be decided by a simple majority.

iii) Any participant in the VGS may attend and speak at any formal meeting, and may vote at the AGM and in email polls.

**e)** Minutes from all formal meetings are published on the VGS website and by email distribution to members; it is accepted that some manual distribution may also be necessary.

## **8) Resources**

VGS resources are administered by the elected Officers, and applied solely to achieve VGS objectives, as agreed from time to time. A simple majority of Officers is required to authorise expenditure.

**a)** In addition to the Treasurer at least two named signatories to the Bank account shall be provided from within the Coordination Group and/or Officers. Two signatures are needed to authorise any transaction other than an online transaction, only the Treasurer is authorised to carry out online transactions.

**b)** The Officers and the Coordination Group shall receive regular reports on the finances. Payments from the VGS funds must be notified to them, normally in advance.

**c)** The VGS Officers in consultation with the Coordination Group will, from time to time, set the maximum emergency payment that may be made for any activity prior to retrospective authorisation.

**d)** The accounts shall be examined annually by a person other than the Treasurer to see that they are a true record of the transactions.

**e)** The financial year shall run from 1st June.

**f)** All non-financial resources shall be held where ever convenient and their whereabouts shall be recorded by the Secretary, or by another Officer if the position of Secretary does not exist at that time. Such resources shall not be relocated without permission of that recording Officer. The list of such resources and their location shall be placed on the VGS website.

**9) Constitution**

**a)** Established in 2005 as "The Vision Group for Sidmouth", the VGS adopted a formal constitution in June 2008.

**b)** The aims and procedures of VGS have and will evolve and be re-articulated from time to time.

**c)** Amendments to the constitution may be made by a resolution passed by a more than two-thirds majority of those present and voting at the Annual General Meeting or at a General Meeting. Proposed alterations will be circulated to the VGS participants by email newsletter not less than 7 days before the date of that meeting.

**10) Closure of the Group**

The VGS may be dissolved by a more than two thirds majority voting at a special General Meeting (the dissolving meeting). Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of debts and liabilities shall be transferred to a local not for profit organisation with similar objects, as approved at the dissolving meeting.

**11) Adoption and amendment of the Constitution**

This revised constitution of the VGS (formally "The Vision Group for Sidmouth") was adopted on .....7th June 2019.....

at the AGM held at .....Leigh Browne Room, Dissenter, EX10 8ER ...

Signed *Jenny Leonard* ..... Position *Chair* ..... Date *7<sup>th</sup> June '19*

Signed *Mary Walton-Till* ..... Position *Secretary* ..... Date *7<sup>th</sup> June '19*

The Minutes of this meeting are available on the VGS website.

The need to amend to Constitution was discussed at the meeting of Coordination Group and Officers of the VGS held at 'Dissenter of Sidmouth' on 3rd April 2019. Details of the discussion and agreements are shown in the Minutes of the meeting posted on the VGS website.

Revisions to the above document were made on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 to provide clarity in some sections for insurance purposes.

These were agreed on ...14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024... by the Officers at that time.

Signed *Mary Walton-Till* .....