



Chelmsford City Neighbourhood Group : Constitution

1 Name

The name of the association is "**Chelmsford City Neighbourhood Watch Group**" [referred to herein as '**The Watch**'].

2 Legal status

The Watch is an unincorporated voluntary organisation.ⁱ

3 Affiliations

The Watch is affiliated with the Essex County Neighbourhood Watch as part of the County Neighbourhood Watch network which is part of the national Neighbourhood Watch Network (NHWN), a registered charitable organisation.

4 The Purposes of the Watch

The purposes of **The Watch** are:

- a) to raise the awareness and profile of the local Neighbourhood Watches across the City of Chelmsford,ⁱⁱ and so help increase community safety and reduce the fear of crime;
- b) to promote good citizenship and increase public participation in the prevention and detection of crime through Neighbourhood Watch groups;
- c) on behalf of local Neighbourhood Watches across the City of Chelmsford, to seek and deploy resources for local Watches;
- d) to seek and maintain close working relationships with Essex Police, Chelmsford City Council, Essex County Council, and other agencies, organisations and other potential partners, that promote the effective working of Neighbourhood Watch across the City area;
- e) to liaise with, and represent the interests of the Chelmsford groups of Neighbourhood Watches on, the Essex County Neighbourhood Watch Association;
- f) to ensure the proper working of local Watches across the City of Chelmsford area in accordance with the Neighbourhood Watch Code of Ethics and this constitution.

5 The Organisation of the Watch and Membership

- a) **The Watch** shall cover the area covered by the administrative area of Chelmsford City Council: this area is referred to in this document as the '**Neighbourhood Watch**

District, or **District**. The terms 'Chelmsford City Group of Neighbourhood Watches' and the 'City Watch' shall be construed accordingly.

- b) **The Watch** district shall comprise local **recognised** Neighbourhood Watches known as '**Area Watches**' or '**Local Watches**' [referred to herein as '**Area/Local Watches**' or '**Area/Locality**']: such watches are groups of neighbourhoods, streets, etc; they may comprise the whole of a civil parish or subdivisions of such parishes, or defined areas of non-parished urban areas.
- c) Each Area/Locality may be subdivided into 'Streets', or similar arrangement, which may comprise one or more streets, communities, or other local neighbourhoods or identities.
- d) The membership of **the Watch** is open to all **recognised** Area/Local Watches operating in the District. An Area/Locality shall be represented on the City Watch Coordinating Committee by its Area/Local Coordinator, or her or his **representative**. Such **representatives** shall be defined accordingly.
- e) **Recognition**: Area/Local Watches should apply for membership of the City Group and shall be recognised by **The Watch** so long as they comply with this constitution. Any organisation or group purporting to be a Neighbourhood Watch but is not formally recognised may not legally refer to itself as 'Neighbourhood Watch' or use any official insignia of Neighbourhood Watch.

6 Conduct of Neighbourhood Watch

- a) **The Watch** and its associated recognised Area/Local Watches shall be conducted according to the following rules:
 - i. The principles of operating Neighbourhood Watches are the Neighbourhood Watch Code of Ethics (see Annex). In particular, Neighbourhood Watches:-
 - (a) are non-party political and its members shall not express any party political view whilst performing any Neighbourhood Watch function or whilst engaged in any such activity;
 - (b) shall be inclusive of all religious, ethnic, social, racial, or other such groups;
 - (c) shall be welcoming and inclusive to all individuals irrespective of their race, gender (including transgender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status), pregnancy, maternity or paternity, religion or belief, or age or disability, and shall treat all people fairly and with respect, and ensure equality of opportunity for all;
 - (d) shall make reasonable adjustments to ensure Neighbourhood Watch activity is inclusive for all members of their local community;

- (e) does not support any form of independent patrols or action that could be regarded as vigilantism,ⁱⁱⁱ and discourages the use of private security organisations in public areas.
- ii. **The Watch** shall ensure that the conduct of all its communications and publicity, in any form or through any medium (including social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc), is according to the principles set out in section 6 a) i., above.
- b) The conduct of local Area/Local Watches, as defined by section 5 b) above, shall be in accordance with 6 a), above.
- c) If a local Area/Local Watch does not conduct its activities in accordance with 6 a), the District Watch is dutybound to intervene to provide advice and support to ensure the Area/Locality conducts its activities accordingly. In an extreme case where an Area/Local Watch does not conduct itself accordingly, and does not respond to advice and guidance, the District Watch may cease to recognise the Area/Local Watch and if necessary take steps to organise a replacement Area/Local Watch.

7 General Meetings of the Watch

7.1 General Meetings

- a) There shall be General Meetings of the Members of **the Watch** held every two months, or on any other regular basis that Members may agree to.
- b) Such meetings shall promote the work and activities of Neighbourhood Watch across the District according to Neighbourhood Watch Purposes described in this Constitution.
- c) General Meetings shall be chaired by the Chair of **the Watch**, or in her or his absence, by the Vice Chair. In the absence of either the Chair or Vice Chair, the meeting shall elect a chair for that meeting.

7.2 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- d) There shall be a General Meeting of all Members of **the Watch** held annually after the formation of **the Watch**, and thereafter within 13 months of the previous annual meeting.
- e) Each Area/Local Watch may nominate one delegate to attend the meeting and participate with full voting rights (one per Area) on all matters on the Agenda.
- f) There must be at least 33% of Areas/Localities represented at the meeting for any voting to take place.
- g) At least 14 days' notice of the AGM shall be given to all Areas/Localities.
- h) There shall be formal business agenda for the AGM, and formal minutes shall be recorded.

- i) The agenda shall include the following:
 - i. Apologies for absence.
 - ii. Minutes of the previous AGM and consideration of any matters arising.
 - iii. Reports:
 - Chairman's Annual Report
 - Secretaries' Annual Reports (General, Membership)
 - Treasurer's Annual Report of Accounts
 - iv. Any special resolutions from Areas – where at least 33% of Areas have formally made a proposal at least five days prior to the publication of the agenda.
 - v. Election of an Executive Committee [as described in Paragraph 7.3 below]. For the election of Chair, the chair of the meeting shall be taken by the Vice Chair, or in his/her absence by the Hon. Secretary.
 - vi. Reports from Members re district/area
- j) The formal meeting may be preceded or followed (or both) by activities, such as presentations, that promote the principles and work of Neighbourhood Watch for the benefit of Members.

7.3 Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

Where at least 33% of Area/Locality representatives sign a written request with resolution to the Hon Secretary requesting and Extraordinary General Meeting of **The Watch**, the Hon. Secretary shall call such EGM, giving at least 21 days notice with the agenda. If the chairman is unable to take the chair for any reason, the vice chairman shall take the chair. In her or his absence the Hon. Secretary shall take the chair.

In particular:-

- a) Winding up - any money or property remaining after payment of debts must be given to a charity with similar purposes to this one.
- b) Changes to the Constitution - can be made at an AGM or General Meeting. No change can be made that would make the organisation no longer a voluntary organisation.
- c) General Meeting - called on written request from a majority of members.
- d) The Executive Committee may also call a General Meeting to consult the membership

8 The Executive Committee

- a) **The Watch** will be managed by an Executive Committee comprising the following members, who shall be elected (or re-elected) annually from the representatives of Watch Members present at the Annual General Meeting (AGM – see above):
 - Chairman
 - Honorary Secretary
 - Honorary Treasurer

- Honorary Membership Secretary
 - A delegate to County Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordination meetings and events
- b) In addition, if deemed appropriate, the following additional members of the Executive Committee may be elected (or re-elected) from the representatives of Members present at the AGM:
- Vice Chairman
 - Assistant Honorary Secretary (Minutes) – to take minutes of formal general meetings of Members of the Watch (AGMs and EGMs)
 - Up to two additional members

9 Carrying out the Purpose of the Watch

In order to carry out the purposes of **The Watch**, the Executive Committee has the authority on behalf of **The Watch** to:

- a) operate bank accounts, annually audited, and with signatories of the Honorary Treasurer and any one of: Chair, Vice Chair, Hon. Secretary, or Honorary Membership Secretary.
- b) raise funds, receive grants and donations
- c) under the auspices of the Executive Committee, apply funds to carry out the work of **The Watch**
- d) co-operate with and support other organisations with similar purposes
- e) do anything which is lawful and necessary to achieve its purpose

10 Meetings of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall meet as necessary to conduct the business of **The Watch** and to carry out its purpose. All meetings must be minuted and conducted according to a formal agenda, published at least 7 days prior to the date of the meeting. There must be at least 33% of the Executive Committee present.

11 Money and Assets

- a) Money and property must only be used for **The Watch's** purposes.
- b) The Executive Committee must ensure that accounts are kept. The most recent annual accounts can be seen by anybody on request.
- c) Member of the Executive Committee cannot receive any money or property from the Watch, except to refund reasonable out of pocket expenses.
- d) Money must be held in **The Watch's** bank account. All cheques must be signed by the Hon. Treasurer and one other mandated officer as defined in 9(a), above.

12 Agreement

This constitution was adopted on 23 July, 2019 at **The Watch's** AGM.

Version 5.1 (23 July 2019)

[continued on separate sheet if necessary]

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- ⁱ As such, the Watch has no separate legal personality from its members; it is simply an association of people bound by identifiable rules and membership. An unincorporated association is usually formed by agreement between its members in the form of a constitution or set of rules. The 'unincorporated' part of the description means that the organisation is not a company (which is incorporated).
 - ⁱⁱ The City of Chelmsford is the administrative authority of the District of Chelmsford local government area: the Chelmsford City Neighbourhood Watch Group covers the District area of the City of Chelmsford, including all of its parished and non-parished areas.
 - ⁱⁱⁱ Vigilantism is defined as 'the practice of ordinary people in a place taking unofficial action to prevent crime or to catch and punish people believed to be criminals' (Cambridge University on-line dictionary).