# Friends of Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park Constitution

## Name

We are called “The Friends of Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park”.

## Aims

* To encourage more people, from all sections of the community, to use the park and to enjoy its full potential and promote an atmosphere of mutual appreciation and respect.
* To protect, conserve and enhance The Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park as a place of freedom, recreation and enjoyment for the long term benefit of all sections of the local community.
* To use its funds to support, maintain and increase the facilities in the park
* To act as a focal point for the involvement of the community in consultations with Rochford District Council concerning the park.

## Powers

Friends of Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park have the power to:

* work in partnership with Rochford District Council;
* receive contributions through a membership fee;
* carry out anything else within the law necessary to reach the group’s aims.

## Membership

* Membership is open to all as long as they share the Aims of the Friends group.
* Membership will run for 1 calendar year commencing on January 1st of each year.
* The membership fee is £5.00 per household, per annum.
* Termination of membership may be considered if an individual member’s behaviour is detrimental to the aims of the group.
* Any termination of membership can only take place following a simple majority vote of the Committee.
* Members whose membership has been terminated will be notified in writing with the reasons for the termination and their current year’s membership fee.

## Committee

* The Committee manages the group’s work and makes decisions.
* The Committee shall normally consist of 4 Officers who will be Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary and up to a maximum of six other members, to include a representative of Rochford District Council.
* Each Officer of the Committee will be elected at the AGM.
* Officers will serve for one year unless re-elected.
* In the event of a member of the Committee resigning, unless the number of Officers on the Committee falls below three, up to three new members can be co-opted pending their confirmation at the next AGM. However, if the number of Officers falls below three a Special General Meeting will be called to replace those Officers.

## Finance

* The financial year shall run from January to December.
* The Committee agreed and adopted the Procurement/Payment Policy and Procedures (appended).

## Committee Meetings

* The committee will meet not less than 4 times a year.
* The committee shall only take decisions when at least three members of the committee including 2 Officers are present. Decisions will be made by a simple majority vote.
* All meetings must be minuted, distributed to all members and available to any interested party on request.

## General Public Meetings

* There will be at least one general meeting for members, other park users, police, school representatives and other interested parties per year. This could be the AGM
* These meetings will be used to:
* Keep members and the public up to date with plans and decisions affecting the park.
* Collect the views of members and other park users.
* The Committee Chairperson will chair these meetings.
* All members have the right to attend and vote.
* Decisions will be made by a simple majority vote or by a minimum of 6 members; this can be by a show of hands.
* Meetings will be minuted and minutes distributed to all members and available to any interested party on request.
* Notification of General Public meetings will be by way of email/posted to members and notices displayed in and around the Country Park.

## Annual General Meetings

* Every year there will be an Annual General Meeting which will be held between February and July.
* The business of the AGM will include:
* Election of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer by members.
* Setting the annual subscription for the forthcoming year.
* Receiving a report from the Chairperson on the activities of the Friends for the previous year.
* Receiving a report from the Treasurer on the finances of the group for the year.
* Amendment of the constitution.
* Identify and discuss objectives for the forthcoming year.
* The AGM will be chaired by the Committee Chairperson.
* Notice of the AGM with the Agenda and any supporting documents will be emailed/posted to members at least fourteen days in advance and notices displayed in and around the park.

## Alteration of the Constitution

## The Constitution can only be amended by majority agreement at the AGM and by a minimum of 6 members. If required, the Committee may need to call a Special General Meeting to discuss any proposed changes, if so members will be notified of such by email/letters.

## Events

* All the events organised and managed by the group and held in the park are with the consent of Rochford District Council and will be commensurate with a Country Park and the aims of the group.
* The Committee will ensure that relevant applications and risk assessments for any events that they hold will be submitted to the Council in a timely manner.

## Dissolution of the Group

* The group may be wound up at any time at a General Meeting provided it has been proposed by the Committee and agreed by two thirds of those members present.
* Should the Friends of Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park cease to exist, any residual funds shall be paid to a suitablewildlife charity to be agreed at the final meeting

**Chairperson**

**Treasurer**

**Secretary**

**Member**

**Member**

This Constitution was adopted at an AGM held at St Laurence and All Saints Church on June 29th 2011.

The amended aims of the group were agreed at the AGM held at Grove Wood Primary School on the 9th July 2014.

Amendments and updates were agreed at the AGM held at Grove Wood Primary School on 8th July 2015.

Amended on 28th September 2023 to include the Procurement/Payment Policy and Procedures (Appended)

FRIENDS OF CHERRY ORCHARD COUNTRY PARK PROCUREMENT / PAYMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

POLICY OBJECTIVES

* To state the key principles related to income, payments, expenses, procurement, and custody of assets.
* To ensure effective and efficient procedures apply to the FOCOP group.
* To safeguard the FOCOP group and it’s committee members.
* To ensure transparency on FOCOP group policy.
* To minimize cost and maximise value for money of our members funds.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE

It is an underlying principle for the FOCOP group that all income received and purchases made are consistent with the intention of supporting the group’s underlying aims, which are set out in our constitution. For the avoidance of doubt, these are listed below.

* To encourage more people, from all sections of the community, to use the park and to enjoy its full potential and promote an atmosphere of mutual appreciation and respect.
* To protect, conserve and enhance The Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park as a place of freedom, recreation, and enjoyment for the long term benefit of all sections of the local community.
* To use its funds to support, maintain and increase the facilities in the park.
* To act as a focal point for the involvement of the community in consultation with Rochford District Council concerning the park.

Committee members when making procurement and payment decisions will comply with applicable laws and regulations at all times, and act in a manner that will not bring disrepute on the group or other stakeholders, such as Rochford District council.

EXPENSES POLICY

It is permissible for committee members to claim expenses for costs incurred on behalf of the group, provided that the costs incurred meet the underlying principle of the group as stated above and are reasonable. All claims should have valid receipts. For expenses less than £50 (Fifty British Pounds), the expense claim should require the approval of the Treasurer. In the event it is the Treasurer who is making the expense claim, then approval is required from the Chairperson. For expenses greater than or equal to £50 (Fifty British pounds), then the approval should be sought from the Treasurer and the Chairperson.

PAYMENTS POLICY

All payments require dual authority, by signature on the relevant invoice, of two bank mandated signatories.

CUSTODY OF ASSETS

The group will maintain an asset register of all items that have a residual value of greater than £500.00 (Five hundred British pounds only)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All conflict of interest should be declared at the earliest possible time and preferably prior to procurement discussions commencing when possible. Possible conflicts of interest are typically when committee members have a direct connection by way of family or friends to potential suppliers, customers or other stakeholders. The chairperson will decide on the appropriate course of action should a conflict of interest be present, which may involve the conflicted person excluded from the discussion. In the event the conflicted person is the chair person, then the full committee excluding the chairperson decides on the appropriate course of action.

TRANSPARENCY AND SCRUTINY

The committee aims to comply with the charity commissions rules and guidelines with regards to scrutineering, despite having no obligation to do so. It will keep thorough accounting records of all receipts and payments and prepare reports in accordance with best practice. This includes having an independent scrutineer of our accounting records on at least an annual basis, in circumstances where annual income exceeds £25,000.00 (Twenty Five Thousand British pounds only). The committee may decide when annual income is less than £25,000.00 whether or not to have the accounts independently scrutineered.

PROJECT PROCUREMENT POLICY

Should the committee propose an investment in the park greater than £1000.00 (One thousand British pounds), then the committee will put together a formal justification detailing the rationale for the project and cost incurred. The committee project manager should seek 3 quotations for the work. The project manager is not compelled to accept the cheapest quotation, but in the event the cheapest quotation is not selected, a narrative description should be provided justifying why this quote was not selected. The project should be approved at a full committee meeting and ratified by Rochford District Council (the landowner) prior to commencement of the project.

For projects less than £1000.00 (One thousand British pounds), the procedure is identical although only 2 quotations are required.

CONSERVATION WORKING GROUP

The FOCOP group has permission from Rochford District council to carry out working parties within the park supporting the council on conservation activities on a periodic basis. Costs associated with activity are allowable provided they are reasonable, in line with the groups underlying principles as stated above. Costs will need to be proposed by the leader of the conservation group and are subject to the approval of the Treasurer, if they are less than £100.00 (One hundred British pounds only), and by the full committee if greater than this.

ORGANISATION Of EVENTS

The FOCOP committee will seek the permission of the landowner Rochford District Council prior to the organisation of any events within the boundaries of the park. Events proposed should be consistent with the groups underlying principles as stated above. Costs associated with events are permissible provided they are reasonable, proposed by the event organiser, and approved by the Treasurer if less than £100.00 (One hundred pounds only) and by the Treasurer and Chairperson if greater than this.

CASH AND RESERVES

The group will maintain a bank account with a leading UK bank. Petty cash is to be minimized and cash transactions are to be avoided whenever possible, due to reduced transparency.

The committee intends for its financial assets to be used for the benefit of the country park. However it may decide to hold a reserve to cover unanticipated urgent requirements that may arise. The committee currently considers a reserve of £3000.00 (Three thousand British pounds) the current optimum level of reserve. This reserve amount may be amended from time to time, at a full committee meeting. The reserve amount can be invested in order to secure future income for the benefit of the park, provided such investment is with a bank of high financial strength credit rating, and covered by the UK Government deposit protection scheme.

The use of overdraft, loans, credit card facilities or any other form of borrowing is not permitted without the approval of the full committee.

NON COMPLIANCE

In the event that policies and procedures above are inadvertently or deliberately breached, then the incident should be at the earliest possible time be brought to the attention of the chairperson who will decide on the appropriate action to be taken. If the breach is by the chairperson then it should be brought to the attention of the full committee.

This policy was adopted by the FOCOP Group committee on the 28th September 2023.

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Jill Ewing, Chairperson

Date: 28.09.2023