

Application for designation as a Neighbourhood Forum under the provisions of the Localism Act 2012:

Highgate Neighbourhood Forum

Contact: Chair - Maggy Meade-King, email: admin@highgateneighbourhoodforum.org.uk

Neighbourhood Area

We attach a map (*Highgate Hi Res July 2012*) showing the proposed area for our neighbourhood forum – **Highgate Neighbourhood Area**. Please see attached our *Application to become a Neighbourhood Area* for more details on this and confirmation that we have agreed the boundary with our neighbouring community groups and residents' groups within the Area.

Constitution

We attach a copy of our constitution (*HNF constitution 2012 – updated 120712*). This was formally adopted at our Inaugural Annual General Meeting on May 29, 2012. Please note that the list of Affiliates described in Appendix 2 has expanded since the Constitution was updated – see the *Affiliates* attachment.

Statement

1. The Highgate Neighbourhood Forum has been established with the express purpose of promoting and improving the social, economic and environmental well being of Highgate (as defined by the attached map). In addition, you will note that the first of the principles outlined in our Constitution states that the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum “will take the distinctive character and heritage of Highgate into account in all its actions, and will aim to ensure that all development in the Area preserves or enhances this character”. We intend to work closely with organisations and communities in neighbouring areas in developing our plan and co-operate over areas and issues of mutual interest.
2. **Membership of the Forum** is open to all individuals who live or work in the area and also to elected members representing the area. We have no membership fees and are endeavouring to recruit members from across the geographical area and from different sections of the community. We currently (August 2012) have more than **150 individual members** (see attached *HNF Individual and Business Members*) and expect to recruit many more once our leaflets/questionnaires have gone to every household (see below). **Considerably more residents are kept in touch with Forum activities via their residents' associations and/or action groups** (see attached list of 37 *Affiliates*). We therefore have considerably more than the legislative requirement for 21 members and can confirm that they are predominantly

residents of the area but also include people with businesses here and all our Councillors.

3. **Members can participate in the Forum** in a variety of ways. First of all, we are encouraging everyone in the Area to fill in our questionnaire, either online or on paper. Both our website and our leaflet also give an email address to contact the Committee to be kept informed/get more involved and two drop off points for contact for those not on the Internet. Right now, around 30 people are delivering leaflets across the Area and our 37 affiliated organisations are urging people to fill in the Forum Questionnaire online. The leaflets, the website and mentions on other websites and in the press are bringing in new members all the time, and they will all be offered the opportunity to participate in the walkabouts and the workshop events (see below). In addition a number of people have been approached directly to participate in the Forum sub-groups (see below). We will publicise all the forthcoming events via our web site, our database of members (to whom we send regular updates), our Affiliates (who represent hundreds and maybe thousands of people across our Area) and through our local media.
4. We have a written **Constitution** (attached).
5. We have a **Committee** of 21 people (*HNF Committee Addresses* attached) – 15 elected annually at our AGM, plus six Councillors from the two relevant wards in Camden and Haringey. I should add that all our Councillors (from three political parties) have been very supportive of the proposed Forum from the onset. To be clear, this is the Committee elected annually by our members (potentially everyone who lives or works in Highgate but currently 150 strong) – the Neighbourhood Forum itself is the whole membership and it merely elects the Committee to undertake necessary administrative tasks. Many more people are actively involved in the Forum – for instance currently in delivering our questionnaire leaflets – and 80 people attended our Inaugural AGM.
6. We have a structure of **sub groups** to address particular issues (see Schools at 16 below) and in particular Community Engagement and Neighbourhood Planning – I attach a list of these (*HNF Committee Structure*) so you can see the extent of our activities. All of these sub-groups have a range of membership – selected for their interests and expertise - much wider than the overall Forum Committee.
7. The **geographical spread of our membership** is across our area. We don't, as yet, have a way of measuring the exact geographical location of our individual members, though our questionnaire (see below) will soon provide us with exact data on the responses to that. However, I have annotated the

list of Affiliates attached to indicate the breadth of our coverage and to demonstrate that our support does cover the whole of our area. I have also included the addresses of our Committee members (*HNF Committee Addresses*) to show how they are spread across the Highgate Neighbourhood Area and highlighted our Business members in red for Highgate Village and purple for Archway Road (*HNF Individual and Business Members*).

8. **Community engagement:** we have endeavoured to reach all sectors of our community before applying for designation, but our efforts are ongoing and will, no doubt continue throughout the life of the Forum. In the first instance, we contacted all the local residents' associations and action groups and asked them if they were interested in being involved in the proposed Neighbourhood Forum in Highgate. Having received a positive response, we called a meeting on January 26, 2012, which most organisations and a number of interested individuals attended (around 70 people). This meeting resolved to take the Forum forward. A Community Engagement sub-group then worked with MADE (consultants funded by the Government's Building Communities programme) on ways to reach everyone across our community.
9. As a result, our first initiative is the production of the attached **leaflet and questionnaire** (*HNF leaflet-g*) to introduce the Forum and glean the views of everyone across the community. We have asked our affiliates to deliver it to their members and we are currently (August 2012) in the process of delivering the leaflets to every household in our Neighbourhood Area. You will note from the leaflet that two local organisations have provided dropboxes on either side of the area to allow residents who do not have Internet connection to give us their views.
10. The questionnaire is also on our **website:** <http://www.highgateneighbourhoodforum.org.uk> as is our constitution, the minutes of all our general and Committee meetings and a general explanation of the Forum and our activities. We also use this web address in all media coverage of the Forum (to date, several articles in our local magazine *Buzz* and a piece in the local newspaper *The Ham and High*), as it provides an easy way to contact us for those with Internet connection. Our questionnaire is also on the Haringey Consultations webpage and on some relevant local websites.
11. Two of our members are working on a **Community Calendar** for our website which we will use to publicise our events and which will also be available to our Affiliates to publicise their own events.
12. A new Forum member (a Politics graduate student who heard about us from a leaflet delivered to his home) has now set us up **Facebook and Twitter**

accounts, most particularly to reach younger members of our community. He is also intending to weave our work into his forthcoming MA.

13. Once the leaflets have been distributed and while the analysis of the questionnaire results is undertaken, we intend to undertake PlaceCheck walkabouts (www.placecheck.info/) to have a more detailed look at the various sections of our neighbourhood.
14. Following that – probably in late Autumn – we hope to hold **several workshop engagement events** where we announce the results of the questionnaire, report back on the walkabouts and then proceed to pull this all together to **form a Vision** of how we would like Highgate to be in the future. This Vision will form the basis of our Neighbourhood Plan. The Princes Foundation are applying to DCLoG for funding to support us in organising these events and preparing our Neighbourhood Plan.
15. In the meantime, we will continue in our efforts to reach all sectors of the community. We are delivering our leaflets to every household and have had a good response so far from all parts of our community.
16. Specifically, we have tried from the beginning to involve all **faith groups**. So far, St Michael's Church (CofE) has joined us, as has the Muguran Hindu Temple (Tamil community). We continue to try and engage the non-conformist churches and the Highgate Synagogue.
17. **Housing tenure:** we have worked particularly hard to make sure we include residents living in all types of housing tenures in both Boroughs. All the large apartment blocks are included in our Affiliates, as are all the residents' associations covering groups of residential streets. Both the major Council estates on the Haringey side of our Area (Highgate and Hillcrest) are now affiliated – in both cases after encouragement from us and local Councillors to revive their residents' associations. We will now see if any representatives of these associations would be prepared to be co-opted onto the Forum Committee.
18. The only remaining Council estate in our Area – the mansion blocks on the Holly Lodge Estate in Camden – is not yet affiliated as we haven't been able to get any response from their residents' association. However, the Holly Lodge Community Centre has affiliated, we and our Councillors continue to try and engage residents and we will deliver a questionnaire leaflet to all the flats in the blocks. (As I mentioned in my earlier email response, Highgate Newtown is in the Dartmouth Park NF Area).

19. **Schools:** you will see on our website that one of our Committee members has already run a successful project with one of our primary schools, gathering their emphatic views about what is good and bad about Highgate. He and his colleagues on our Schools sub-group are now endeavouring to extend that project - i.e using IT to engage students in expressing their views on the future of our Area - to all the primary and secondary schools in our area. The new member who has set up our Facebook and Twitter accounts is also planning to engage sixth formers in our local secondary schools Art and Design classes in designing our logo and Government and Politics classes in more sophisticated analysis of our attempts at local democracy.
20. **Residential and care homes:** one of our residential homes – the Mary Fielding Guild – has already affiliated and is encouraging their residents to fill in our questionnaire. We intend to engage with the other residential and care homes in our Area.
21. **Businesses:** Another of our Committee members, who is both a resident and trader in the area, has organised the Highgate Village Business Association and has offered to advise traders on Archway Road on doing the same. Other members of the Committee are making strenuous efforts to involve these traders on an individual basis and, as you will see on the list of individual and business supporters (attached), have already had some success.
22. **Disabled people:** the Harington Scheme (horticultural training for young people with learning disabilities) is one of our affiliates and will be working closely with us on our development plans for Highgate. We are also endeavouring to reach other groups representing disabled people via our other affiliates and individual members.
23. So, in short, we have made great efforts from the beginning to be as **inclusive of all groups within our community as possible – we want everyone to feel included in the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum.** We don't underestimate the scale of our ambition, but our main focus over the next few months will be to engage with as many people as we possibly can of all age groups and interests and in the many and varied types of housing our community includes. We are determined that the views gathered by our questionnaire will be genuinely representative of the whole community with no pre-suppositions on our behalf (hence the open questions in the questionnaire).
24. We realise we have only just begun on this journey and it will be a mark of the success of the Forum how many previously unheard voices are heard and how much energy and enthusiasm the Forum is able to generate.

Maggy Meade-King
Chair, Highgate Neighbourhood Forum,
7 August, 2012