

Community Action: Whitley and Shaw (CAWS) Constitution

Area

1.1 The CAWS area covers the separate villages of Shaw and Whitley as outlined by their Settlement Boundaries as maintained by Wiltshire County Council and Melksham Without Parish Council. The villages are to the north of Melksham.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1. CAWS exists to carry out activities as may be deemed necessary, for the benefit of the community, that promote, support and achieve changes and improvements to the quality of life and wellbeing of local people and businesses.

In furtherance of this aim CAWS shall:

- a) be non-party political;
- b) solicit the views and needs of the residents and businesses;
- c) represent member residents and businesses within the CAWS area;
- d) promote community cohesion;
- e) coordinate community action;
- f) increase awareness of future developments in the community;
- g) work with other local bodies and associations;
- h) consult and inform all members regularly;
- i) promote membership to all members of the community;
- j) raise and hold funds to cover the costs of CAWS;
- k) communicate decisions, requests and enquiries of CAWS to various bodies and individuals.

3. Membership

3.1. Membership of CAWS shall be open to:

- a) all residents living in the CAWS area;
- b) all businesses in the CAWS area;
- c) subject to approval of the Committee, any business or resident outside the CAWS area.

3.2 The Secretary shall keep records of all members of CAWS.

3.3 Members of CAWS have voting rights at Annual General Meetings and Extraordinary General Meetings, and are able to request Extraordinary General Meetings.

3.4 Voting membership will automatically end when a member stops living in the CAWS area, the business closes down or the member resigns.

3.5 In the event of continuous or serious breaches of the Constitution, membership of CAWS can be suspended or ended by a two-thirds majority vote of the Committee.

3.6 A member whose membership has been suspended in accordance with clause 3.5 shall be entitled to have that suspension reviewed at the next general meeting.

3.7 A copy of the Constitution will be given to all new members of CAWS on request.

4. Affiliation

4.1 CAWS may affiliate to any non-party political organisation whose aims and objectives are commensurate with those CAWS and which can help CAWS in achieving its aims and objectives.

5. The Committee Officers

5.1 The Committee shall have the following Officers:

- a) Chairperson;
- b) Secretary and Deputy Chairperson;
- c) Treasurer.

5.2 Committee Officers shall be elected at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and will serve for 2 years.

5.3 Committee Officers have voting rights at Committee Meetings, Annual General Meetings, and Extraordinary General Meetings.

6. The Committee Members

6.1 In addition to the Officers, the Committee shall be comprised of residents and businesses of Shaw and Whitley. It shall have up to 17 non-Officer members.

6.2 Committee Members shall be elected by a majority vote of CAWS Members attending a Committee Meeting, an Annual General Meeting, or an Extraordinary General Meeting but shall always be ratified at an Annual General Meeting.

6.3 Committee Members shall retire after two years, but may stand for re-election to coincide with their retirement.

6.4 Melksham Without Parish Council, the Police Team, Shaw Village Hall committee, Whitley Reading Rooms committee, Speedwatch, Shaw and Whitley Community Hub, Whitley Methodist Church, Shaw Church, and the Community Emergency Group may each nominate a Committee Member, such person to be a serving committee member of that body at the time of their nomination.

6.5 The Committee may co-opt CAWS Members to serve on focus groups however those Members do not have voting rights at meetings.

6.6 Committee Members have voting rights at Committee Meetings, Annual General Meetings, and Extraordinary General Meetings.

7. CAWS Committee Meetings

7.1 CAWS Committee meetings shall be held at least once per quarter and take place in a public place whenever possible.

7.2 A quorum of five Committee members is required to make any decision.

7.3 Decisions shall be reached by a majority vote of those present who have voting rights.

7.4 In the event of a tied vote, the Chairperson has a casting vote.

7.5 The time, place and agenda of such meetings shall be advertised at least seven days in advance of the meeting to the committee members.

7.6 At these meetings the business of CAWS shall be reported and it is open to any member of CAWS to discuss this or to introduce new business.

7.7 The Committee may make decisions outside of formal Committee Meetings (e.g. via email). These decisions will then be confirmed at the next committee meeting.

8. Annual General Meetings

8.1 There shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM), held in the Summer each year.

8.2 The AGM shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the Committee.

8.3 The AGM shall:

- a) receive the Chairperson's report on the year's events and activities;
- b) receive the Treasurer's report confirming as a minimum the state of the CAWS bank account and of its public liability insurance;
- c) receive the Secretary's report;
- d) elect officers and Committee members;
- e) vote on amendments to the Constitution;
- f) consider any resolution put forward by members.

8.4 All members shall receive notification of an AGM not less than 14 days prior to the meeting. Notice of the AGM shall be posted on notice boards in the CAWS area and/or via social media.

8.5 Decisions shall be reached by a majority vote. Every member present shall have a vote.

9. Extraordinary General Meetings

9.1 An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called by the Officers, at least five members of the CAWS Committee or at least ten CAWS Members (i.e. residents and businesses of Shaw and Whitley), with 10 working days' written notice (which shall also provide the reason for the request) given to the Chairperson and Secretary with matters to be discussed.

9.2 The Secretary shall give at least seven days' notice of the Extraordinary General Meeting to CAWS Committee Officers and members.

9.3 Decisions shall be reached by a majority vote. Every member present shall have a vote.

10. Committee Financial Arrangements

10.1 A simple record of any income and expenditure must be produced each year at the AGM and be available to all members on request.

10.2 Accounts should be open to inspection by members on request.

10.3 CAWS may raise funds either by donation, grant application or other means. The proceeds of any such fundraising shall be used in accordance with, and to the furtherance of, the aims and objectives of CAWS.

10.4 CAWS shall have its own bank account to cover its expenses and have its own public liability insurance to cover any events organised outside of the Shaw Village Hall or the Whitley Reading Rooms.

10.5 CAWS may use online banking. Online payments or transfers below the value of £500 can be made by one committee member. Online payments or transfers above £500 must have written approval from 2 committee members.

10.6 Three members of the Committee are signatories to the bank account of which at least two must sign any cheques on behalf of CAWS. Signatories must not be related or be members of the same household.

11. Code of Conduct

11.1 The role of the Committee is to carry out the day-to-day business of CAWS in an efficient, fair and responsive way. In taking decisions on behalf of CAWS, Committee members must always be aware of their responsibility to represent all members.

11.2 All Committee members must comply with the Constitution and Code of Conduct at all times.

11.3 CAWS will provide new members with the appropriate support and make them feel welcome at all times.

11.4 Members shall conduct themselves in a manner that will not cause offence to others. Racist, sexist or inflammatory remarks or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated. The Chair or Committee members have the right to warn the members of their behaviour. If they persist they will be asked to

leave the meeting until further notice. The Committee must arrange a date and time and hold a meeting for them to discuss the incident and make a decision as to what action to take.

11.5 Committee members must never personalise issues and should be willing to recognise that everybody is entitled to express their point of view without unduly preventing progress of discussion on the agenda at a Committee Meeting.

11.6 A serious breach of the CAWS Code of Conduct may result in a Committee member, following a majority vote of the Committee, being asked to resign.

11.7 The Committee will take decisions based on there being a unanimous agreement or a simple majority of those present if a vote is taken. Minority voters should always be prepared to accept the majority decision and not take such a decision as any form of personal slight or criticism.

11.8 Committee Meetings must be held at times which are convenient to the majority of Committee members. Every Committee member must try to attend Committee Meetings regularly. If a Committee member fails to attend three consecutive meetings without giving good reason, they must be asked to consider resigning at the next Committee Meeting. To prevent there being arguments about attendance at meetings, a record will be kept showing who was at each meeting

12. Closure

12.1. An agreement to formally close CAWS shall be taken at either the Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary General Meeting. Any funds still in the possession of CAWS after all debts and liabilities have been paid will be passed to the Melksham Without Parish Council for them to determine how they should best be used for the benefit of the Shaw and Whitley community.

13. Constitution

13.1. This updated Constitution was adopted at the CAWS Annual General Meeting on 21 June 2022.