

Save Old Wives Lees from Industrial Solar

S.O.W.L.I.S

CONSTITUTION

SOWLIS is a Community Group with its main purpose to advance Environmental protection for 114 acres of farmland and to advance the heritage of the North Downs Way that runs through Old Wives Lees.

AIMS

- To help protect a unique, rural landscape, heritage trail, the North Kent Downs and 114 acres of prime agricultural farmland by opposing an application for the Construction of an Industrial scale solar 'farm' at Old Wives Lees, Chilham, Kent.
- To raise awareness of the loss of agricultural land and the detrimental effects to the visual and ecological landscape.
- To provide and share information to local residents and other organisations such as Parish Councils, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), AONB by means of a website, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp Group.
- To advise residents on Planning Rules/time scales and provide advice on how to write letters of objection to the Planning Officer responsible at Ashford Borough Council.
- To raise funds for professional services of experts to review documents presented in the final planning application presented to Ashford Borough Council.

MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

Members of the public are able to join the group via our website: <https://www.sowlis.org/> and will receive regular emails via mailchimp. Members can also join our Facebook and WhatsApp Groups which are private groups but members of the Public are invited to join by answering a number of questions. We also have a Twitter account.

MEMBERSHIP FEE

Membership to SOWLIS is free.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

SOWLIS is committed to treating everyone fairly and with respect and will ensure members, non-members and visitors are not denied access to our meetings because of a discriminatory reason.

COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

SOWLIS has a committee which is responsible for the running of the day- to- day affairs of the group and will meet when deemed necessary. Committee members are volunteers from the Community.

The committee will consist of:

Chair Role

- supporting and supervising the committee and acting as a channel of communication between the committee and members.
- chairing and facilitating members meetings and acting on decisions made by the Group.
- acting as a figurehead for the Group (for example, representing it at functions, meetings).
- leading on the development of the committee and ensuring its decisions are implemented.
- taking urgent action (but not decision making unless authorised) between committee meetings when it isn't possible or practical to hold a meeting.

Treasurer Role

- presenting financial reports to the committee in a format that helps the committee understand the group's financial position.
- advising the Group on how to carry out its financial responsibilities
- liaising with professional advisors.
- overseeing the preparation and scrutiny of annual reports.
- day to day book keeping, budgeting and preparation of reports for each members meeting.

Secretary Role

- taking minutes at each members meeting and other administrative duties
- keep accurate records of all members

The committee may also co-opt people to serve on the committee as and when deemed necessary.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Members will be notified of the date, time and venue of the AGM by email or by post at least a month prior to each meeting.

AGMs will be held once a year (starting in the second year after date of formation of the group) during the first meeting of the year and used to:

- Elect the committee.
- Inform the group members about the work that has been done
- Share financial information and approve the treasurers report

Members may submit items for discussion two weeks prior to the meeting.

Members can nominate themselves for the committee by notifying the current chairperson at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

The quorum – minimum number of members that must attend the meeting for it to elect members or make decisions on behalf of the group will be six.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee meetings will meet at least once prior to each General meeting and three members will be required to be quorate. Committee meetings are open to all members to attend.

GENERAL MEETINGS

General meetings open to all members and non-members will be held as and when necessary, at Old Wives Village Hall.

Ten members need to be present to be quorum (*minimum number of members that must attend the meeting for it to elect members or make decisions on behalf of the group will be ten*).

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

A Special General meeting may be called to discuss important matters that need to be put before the whole membership, such as amendment to the Constitution, election/resignation of committee members or other matters arising.

Members will be notified of the date, time and venue of the Special general Meeting by email or by post at least a month prior to each meeting.

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR MEETINGS

The Chairperson will organise and facilitate each meeting and the Secretary will take minutes of the meeting.

Consensus for decisions affecting the group will be discussed and a solution that is satisfactory to everybody present will be made by working through it together.

If a consensus is not reached by the group members a vote will be made to reach a decision, if there is an equal number of votes on each side, the chair will have an additional casting vote.

FINANCES

In order to have transparency with any money held by the group:

- A bank account will be maintained on behalf of the group at a bank agreed by the committee
- There will be at least three signatories to the account (so that there are always two available to authorise payments)
- Each transaction will require two signatories

- Records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given at each meeting.
- An annual statement of accounts will be presented to the Annual General Meeting.
- All money raised by the Group will be spent solely on the objects laid out in the constitution.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

- The Treasurer will be responsible for paying invoices for any Professional services.

CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

Changes to the Constitution can be made during the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.

Members will be notified of the date, time and venue of the meeting by email or by post at least a month prior to the meeting.

Changes to the constitution will need to be agreed by a quorum of six members present either by consensus or a vote with a simple majority.

DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution of the SOWLIS Group a Special General Meeting will be called and the sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the group.

If it is agreed to dissolve the group, all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid, will be donated to a local charitable organisation which will be decided at the meeting.

THIS CONSTITUTION WAS AGREED AT THE INAUGRAL COMMITTEE MEETING OF SOWLIS GROUP:

SIGNED

COMMITTEE MEMBER

DATE

POSITION IN GROUP

SIGNED

COMMITTEE MEMBER

DATE

POSITION IN GROUP

SIGNED

COMMITTEE MEMBER

DATE

POSITION IN GROUP