

# Runnymede Borough Council Neighbourhood Forum Application (re-designation)

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024

The Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum

Dear Madam/Sir,

## **Application for Neighbourhood Plan Re-Designated Forum**

Following on from the originally approved **Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum** back in March 2019 whereby members of Runnymede Borough Council Planning Committee resolved to designate The Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum, we are now submitting a formal request for the re-designation of the **Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum** as the official entity responsible for the continued development and implementation of the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan. Our initial five-year designation term concluded on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024, following the original designation of the forum on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

### The Progress

Following on from the previously approved and adopted **Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum** and **Virginia Water Neighbourhood Boundary Plan** back in March 2019 (please refer to Appendix A), the Steering Committee and members of the Forum have worked continuously from this date by;

- i) Diligently conducting comprehensive village-wide surveys, to gather valuable insights and data, laying the groundwork for policy formulation. Our initial survey saw over 750 residents and businesses actively participating.
- ii) Fundraising to allow the best possible professional assistance to be appointed.
- iii) Advertising throughout the village with posters and banners displayed in community areas, including the Windsor Great Park, St Ann's School and the VW Community Centre.
- iv) Placing advertisements in the monthly Virginia Water magazine and the annual Wentworth Residents Association membership booklet.
- v) Chairman presented at AGM's including Virginia Park, Wentworth Residents Association, Virginia Court and the Community Centre. In addition to these, the Chairman also gave presentations at the local care homes for the staff and residents.
- vi) Participating in the annual village fete, Trumps Green School and St Ann's Heath School annual summer events.

- vii) Two public open sessions were conducted in the Community Centre and St Ann's Heath School.
- viii) Village-wide door-to-door leaflet deliveries.

During the Covid pandemic, which affected everyone, and after reviewing some of our methods of engagement, we were able to continue gathering evidence on the views of Virginia Water residents. Two of the main concerns that were discovered from feedback received were i. the importance of retaining Virginia Water village as a separate community to avoid coalescence with nearby towns and settlements, and ii. To see an established central core – a village 'heart' encouraging lively community engagement, improving pedestrian and cycle pathways, and ultimately bolstering prosperity for local businesses.

Since 2020, extensive engagements have continued to be conducted in the Virginia Water ward, this again included delivering presentations to residential groups, meeting with local businesses and participating in the village and school fairs, whilst advertising the Neighbourhood Plan with banners, posters and a further door to door leaflet delivery throughout the village. The end of 2023 saw the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan enter into the Regulation 14 stage allowing the residents of Virginia Water to view and comment on the pre-submission draft Plan.

This pre-submission draft Plan was uploaded onto the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Plan website<sup>1</sup> on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and a paper copy was available to read in the Virginia Water Library. The Forum spent three months conducting and engaging with the community. The Regulation 14 consultation period concluded on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.

### The Application

The name of the proposed Neighbourhood Forum is the '**Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum**'. The name of the designated area is '**The Virginia Water Neighbourhood Area**'. The written Constitution shown below was adopted by the meeting held by the Forum on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

The objectives of the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum referred to in the Constitution shall be:

- a) To improve the area known as Virginia Water for the benefit of individuals living and working in the Neighbourhood area and also local business organisations.
- b) To promote the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the Neighbourhood area, to prepare in cooperation with Runnymede Borough Council, a Neighbourhood Plan and to foster community spirit and encourage civic pride.
- c) To promote sustainable development, environmental improvement and conservation by educating, encouraging and assisting the local population in environmental practices and working in partnership with similar groups and organisations.
- d) Becoming a member of the Forum is open to individuals who live and work in the area, local businesses and individuals who carry out business or work in the Neighbourhood

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<sup>1</sup> <https://virginiawaterplan.org/index.html>

Area, aiming for as wide a representation of communities as possible.

The proposed boundaries of the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Area remain unchanged from the area adopted on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019, the details of which are shown on the Runnymede Borough Council website<sup>2</sup> and on the attached plan.

#### Contact details for the Forum

Contact details for at least one member of the Neighbourhood Forum as required by the Neighbourhood Planning regulations<sup>3</sup>: John Pyle, [info@viriniawaterplan.org](mailto:info@viriniawaterplan.org).

#### Meeting the Legal Requirements, including the conditions contained in Section 61F (5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

The Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum meets the legal requirements to be designated by Runnymede Borough Council because, as set out in the Constitution of the Forum, the Forum does have an express purpose of promoting and improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of a neighbourhood area.

In addition, as set out in the Constitution and also reflected in the agreed Designated Area, Forum membership is open to people living and working in the area and also public representatives of the area.

Furthermore, as set out in the Constitution of the Forum and also attached to this application, there are a minimum of 21 members of the Forum who represent Residents Associations, the Wentworth Roads Committee, and individual residents.

The Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum comprises a diverse group of residents and community representatives dedicated to preserving the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Area's unique character, promoting sustainable growth, and addressing the needs and aspirations of all residents. The collective expertise, passion and shared vision enable the proposed Forum to effectively navigate the complexities of local planning processes and advocate for the interests of the local community.

As we seek re-designation, we remain committed to upholding the principles of transparency, inclusivity, and democratic participation in all aspects of our work. We have demonstrated our capacity to facilitate meaningful consultations, conduct thorough research, and produce well-informed policy recommendations that reflect the priorities and values of our community.

Furthermore, we recognise the importance of continuing our accountability and ongoing communication with our residents, businesses, stakeholders and Runnymede Borough Council. We are committed to fulfilling the responsibilities associated with the Neighbourhood Forum designation, working alongside the local planning authority to ensure alignment with broader strategic objectives.

The Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum has been set up in conjunction with Runnymede Borough Council conforming to the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/3>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/637/regulation/10/made>

1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, Schedule 9, Part 1, Section 61G (2) (b).

### Conclusion

In all the circumstances referred to above we ask Runnymede Borough Council to consider and in due course approve this application of the **Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum** to continue as a designated Forum and Neighbourhood Area for a further 5 years.

# **VIRGINIA WATER NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM CONSTITUTION**

## **1. NAME**

- i. The name of the Forum shall be the **Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum** (the Forum).
- ii. The Forum shall cover the Area shown on the attached map known as the **Virginia Water Neighbourhood Area**.  
*[see Appendix 1 to this Application]*

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Forum shall be:

- a) To improve the area known as Virginia Water (the Neighbourhood Area) for the benefit of individuals living and working within the Neighbourhood Area and local business organisations.
- b) To promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Neighbourhood Area.
- c) To prepare in cooperation with the Local Planning Authority, a Neighbourhood Plan for the Neighbourhood Area.
- d) To encourage the goodwill and involvement of the wider community.
- e) To foster community spirit and encourage civic pride.

## **3. POWERS**

In furtherance of the objectives, but not otherwise, the Management Committee may exercise the power to:

- a) Promote the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of those individuals living and working within the Neighbourhood Area.
- b) Promote sustainable development, environmental improvement and conservation by educating, encouraging and assisting the local population in environmental practices, working in partnership with similar groups and organisations.
- c) Invite and receive contributions and raise funds where appropriate, to finance the work of the Forum, and to open a bank account to manage such funds.
- d) Publicise and promote the work of the Forum and organise meetings, training courses, events or seminars etc.
- e) Work with groups of a similar nature and exchange information, advice and knowledge with them, including co-operation with other voluntary bodies, charities, and statutory and non-statutory organisations.
- f) Take any appropriate action that is lawful, which is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Forum, including entering into any contracts which it may see fit.

#### **4. MEMBERSHIP**

- 1) Membership of the Forum is open to:
  - a. Individuals who live in the Neighbourhood Area.
  - b. Local businesses and individuals who carry out business or work in the Neighbourhood Area.
  - c. Local representatives, including Resident Association groups and elected members of Runnymede Borough Council and Surrey County Council representing all or part of the Neighbourhood Area who have an interest in positively and constructively assisting the Forum to achieve its aims and are willing to adhere to the rules of the Forum.
- 2) The Forum will aim for as wide a representation of communities in the Neighbourhood Area as possible.
- 3) Where it is considered membership would be detrimental to the aims and activities of the Forum, the Management Committee shall have the power to refuse membership.
- 4) Any member of the Forum may resign his/her membership by providing the Secretary with written notice.
- 5) The Forum shall have a minimum of 21 members before any decision on neighbourhood planning may be made.
- 6) The Secretary shall maintain a list of members at all times.
- 7) All members shall have an equal vote.

#### **5. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

- 1) The Forum shall be administered by a Management Committee comprising no less than three (3) and no more than eight (8) people, who must be at least eighteen (18) years of age and must live or work in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 2) Members will be elected for a period of up to one year, but may be re-elected at the Forum's annual general meeting (AGM). There is no limit to the number of terms an officer may serve.
- 3) Management Committee members can appoint officers from within the Management Committee to fill vacancies that arise during the year.
- 4) The Management Committee will direct and oversee the work of the Forum and will meet at least four (4) times a year for this purpose.
- 5) Subcommittees or working parties may be appointed by the Management Committee to carry out specific tasks, to consider policies and to advise the Management Committee. Such bodies may be appointed within or outside the membership of the Forum but will be responsible to the Management Committee.

#### **6. OFFICERS**

- 1) The Management Committee may have the following officers:
  - a. Chairman
  - b. Treasurer
  - c. Secretary

And any additional or replacement officers the Management Committee deems necessary to carry out the required activities.

- 2) The officers may be elected by the Management Committee at its first meeting, which should take place within 60 (sixty) days of this Constitution being adopted, and thereafter at the next meeting of the Management Committee after the AGM.

If a vacancy occurs during the course of the year, a replacement shall be elected at the next meeting of the Management Committee.

## **7. MEETINGS**

- 1) The AGM shall take place no later than three (3) months after the end of the Financial year. At least fourteen (14) days' notice must be given before the AGM takes place.
- 2) When required, the Management Committee can decide to call a Special General Meeting (SGM). An SGM shall take place after at least seven (7) days' notice, unless it is deemed as an emergency.
- 3) The Management Committee must call an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Forum within twenty-eight (28) days of a request to do so submitted by twenty (20) members of the Forum or one-third of the membership (whichever is the less). An EGM shall only take place after at least fourteen (14) days' notice.
- 4) Three (3) or more Management Committee members must be present in order for a meeting of the Management Committee to take place.
- 5) All meetings must be minuted and accessible to all members of the Forum and other interested parties.
- 6) All members are entitled to vote at any general meeting. Voting shall be made by a show of hands on a majority basis. Members unable to attend may appoint the Chairman or other officer of the Management Committee to vote on their behalf on any particular issue by sending a notice to one of them (by email or otherwise) authorising them to do so. In the case of a tied vote, the Chairman or an appointed deputy shall make the final decision.

## **8. NOTICES**

Notices to members will be deemed delivered if sent to the member's last notified email address or (where no email address is given) sent by post to the last notified postal address.

## **9. FINANCE**

- 1) The Forum will have the power to raise funds as necessary for its activities, by grant, donation or any other appropriate means. The Management Committee may open one or more bank accounts as necessary in the name of the Forum.
- 2) Funds acquired by the Forum, including donations, contributions and bequests, may be paid into an account operated by the Management Committee in the name of the Forum or alternatively paid to a duly approved representative of the

Runnymede Borough Council, who shall hold those funds on behalf of the Management Committee.

- 3) All funds must be applied to the objectives of the Forum and for no other purpose.
- 4) Any cheques et cetera relating to the Forum's bank account shall be signed by at least two (2) of the following Management Committee members; Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.
- 5) Any income/expenditure shall be the responsibility of the officers of the Management Committee who will be accountable to ensure funds are utilised effectively and that the Forum stays within budget.
- 6) An annual financial report shall be presented at the AGM. The Forum's accounting year shall run from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March.

#### **10. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING**

- 1) Any decision to submit to Runnymede Borough Council for approval any Neighbourhood Plan shall be subject to a majority vote of members present at a meeting of the Forum at which any such decision is considered. The voting quorum shall be a minimum of twenty-one (21) members.
- 2) All consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan will be open to all residents and businesses whether members of the Forum or not.
- 3) The Forum may set up a website to publicise the neighbourhood planning process, record it and seek views of the public.

#### **11. ALTERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION**

- 1) Any changes to this Constitution must be agreed by a majority vote at an AGM, EGM or SGM.
- 2) Proposed amendments to this Constitution by members must be conveyed to the Secretary in writing. The Secretary and other members of the Management Committee shall then decide on a date for an EGM to discuss such amendments.

#### **12. DISSOLUTION**

- 1) The duration of the Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum is five years from the Neighbourhood Forum designation date, as designated by Runnymede Borough Council.
- 2) The Forum may be dissolved if deemed necessary by its members in a majority vote at the AGM, an EGM or an SGM. Any assets or remaining funds after debts have been paid shall be returned to their providers or transferred to local charities or similar groups at the discretion of the Management Committee.

The Constitution was adopted at a general meeting held on: 9<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024

