



SFCA Constitution

1. Our name: **SOMERSET FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION**
Run by Foster Carers for Foster Carers

Objectives –

- To enable carers to have a stronger voice
- To promote good working partnerships
- To provide support and guidance
- To support and enhance knowledge & skills required for fostering
- To offer regular social events for everyone

2. Membership –

- a) Membership to the Somerset Foster Care Association is open to all fostering families who are approved by Somerset County Council. This will include existing and newly approved foster carers.
- b) All foster carers approved by Somerset County Council will be deemed members of the Association unless they sign an “opt out” letter which is available from the local authority or the association. New foster carers will be provided with information about the association and the procedure for opt out as part of the assessment process.

- c) The local authority will share basic details of members to the Association. These can be accessed by the Chair, vice Chair or Secretary of the Association.
- d) All members will have full membership with voting rights at General meetings. There is no subscription fee payable.
- e) We positively welcome all members regardless of race, culture, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability or marital status. We encourage all members to be active and participate in the association.
- f) Members shall agree to have contact details held by the committee. Contact data is defined as home address, mobile numbers and email addresses, if applicable. Any member who does not wish to have their information shared in this way would opt out of the association. Carers can also write to the secretary of the committee to opt out, if they later change their minds.
- g) The local authority will notify the committee Secretary of carers who are members and are later deregistered or resign. This will ensure details are removed as necessary.
- h) The committee may invite, in writing, any other interested parties as guests but only with the full agreement of the committee.

3. The Officers & Duties, decisions etc –

The five main officers of the association are:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Treasurer
- Vice-Treasurer
- Secretary

The five main officers are to be Trustees for the Association.

There will be further general committee members who may have specific roles including social events officer, fundraising officer and liaison officer.

- a) The chairperson will oversee the committee meetings, the members meetings and the AGM. If the chairperson is unable to attend then this role will go to the vice-chairperson. If neither are in attendance the meeting will not be quorate and cannot go ahead.

- b) The vice-chair will assume the duties of the chair in their absence.
- c) The treasurer and vice-treasurer will be responsible for keeping detailed accounts of the income and expenditure of the association.
- d) The secretary will be responsible for arranging meetings, convene and attend all meetings of the committee, the AGM and any special meetings for the association. They shall be responsible for compiling agenda's for meetings and taking and issuing minutes to all members of the association.

4. The Committee & Duties, decisions etc –

- a) The committee shall be made up of the five officers and further general members who are registered foster carers. Non –foster carers can become officers or members of the committee where this serves to be in Somerset Fostering Association's best interests, in order to progress its aims.
- b) Decisions will be made by a simple majority vote. The chair or if not available, the vice-chair, shall in the event of any equality of voting have the casting vote.
- c) Minutes of each meeting will be kept by the secretary and circulated to all committee members. The minutes of all meetings will be available for inspection by any member of the association. Confidential discussions by the committee will be minuted on a separate sheet and kept by the secretary.
- d) The committee shall meet at least 6 times a year.
- e) The treasurer to share details of the current financial situation at each meeting.
- f) Only one family member can be a main officer of the committee at any one time. A partner can be a general member of the committee if required.

5. Meetings, AGM etc –

- a) The Annual General Meeting is to be held in May of each year. The officers and general committee members are to be elected at the AGM and will then stand until the next AGM unless a member wishes to resign or suffer illness or death.
- b) Officers can stand for a consecutive five years but no longer.

- c) There must be at least twenty members present at the AGM. If twenty members are not present then a further AGM must be convened within 28 days at which business can be transacted by any members present.
- d) The treasurer must present an annual report and accounts at the AGM.
- e) Extraordinary General meetings of the association can be called at any time at the request of three members of the committee or at the request of five or more members of the association. To do this members are requested to sign a written request specifying the business to be transacted and submit this to the secretary. The secretary must ensure that a meeting is arranged within fourteen days of receiving the request.
- f) No business can be transacted at any general meeting unless the meeting is quorate: a quorum shall consist of five members of the committee with at least two of these being the chair or vice chair and one other.
- g) All members of the association have full voting rights at any annual, general or extraordinary meeting.

6. Finance –

- a) The financial year for the association will be from 5th April – 4th April each year.
- b) The administrative year will commence the day after the AGM each year and terminate on the date of the following AGM.
- c) The treasurer will inform the committee of the financial situation at every meeting.
- d) The social events or fundraising officer will inform the committee of any money raised or request any funding necessary for an event at every meeting where necessary.
- e) All money raised by, or on behalf of the association is to be used only to further the aims of the association.
- f) There will be three signatures needed for the association account with any two authorised to sign on any particular transaction.

7. Changes to Constitution, Association Policies –

- a) The constitution can only be amended by an Annual or Extraordinary General meeting. Notice of any motion to alter or amend the constitution must be advertised to all members at least twenty one days before these meetings, the committee must facilitate access to all members for any member who is proposing changes to the constitution. Changes will be made by a simple majority vote. In the event of any equality of voting the chair (or in their absence vice chair) will have the casting vote.
- b) *The Association will use/adopt the policies below based on Somerset County Council documentation. All members are expected to adhere to the associations' policies and any other policies that are ratified by the committee. Any member of the association who has breached the association's policies may have their membership terminated.*
 - *Data protection*
 - *Health & safety*
 - *Equal opportunities*
 - *Finance*
 - *Safeguarding*

8. Closing the group –

- a) If at any general meeting a resolution to close the association shall be passed by the majority of the voting members present, an extraordinary general meeting shall be held not less than six weeks after but with at least twenty one days notice.
- b) Extraordinary general meeting will vote on a resolution to close the association. A two thirds majority of attendees will be required for the decision to be confirmed. Members unable to attend but who wish to vote can do so by sending a signed form of proxy that shall be sent to all members no less than fourteen days before the meeting. The proxy vote must be received by the secretary or chair at least one day before the extraordinary meeting.
- c) If the resolution is passed following the procedure above, the committee shall discharge all debts and liabilities of the association in so far as the association has funds with which to do so. Any assets/funds that remain after settling the debts and liabilities must be given or transferred to one or more not for profit or charitable organisations with similar aims to the association. This is to be decided at the extraordinary general meeting by a simple majority vote.

This constitution was formally adopted onFriday 27th January.....
by the people whose signatures appear below.

Name..... Date

Name..... Date.....

Name..... Date.....

Name..... Date.....

Name..... Date.....

Name..... Date.....

Name..... Date.....

Name..... Date.....

Name..... Date.....

Name..... Date.....