#### CONSTITUTION

# (to be read in conjunction with the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Dumfries & Galloway)

Note: The majority of this document will be locked, with Community Councils being able to enter their own information within the green highlighted rows

#### 1.0 COMMUNITY COUNCIL NAME & AREA

**1.1** The name of the Community Council (CC) shall be:

**1.2** The Community Council area shall be as shown on the map attached to the latest Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Dumfries & Galloway (referred to as 'the Scheme' in this document).

#### 2.0 STATUTORY PURPOSES

2.1 The statutory purposes of Community Councils (CCs) established under the Scheme are set out in Section 51(2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as follows:
(X-ref "In addition to any other purpose which a Community Council may pursue, the general purpose of a Community Council shall be to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to the local authorities for its area, and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which those authorities are responsible, and to take such action in the interests of that community as appears to it to be expedient and practicable".

#### 3.0 THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS

**3.1 Role:** CCs are inclusive organisations whose general purpose is to act as a voice for their local area. This will involve CCs articulating the views and concerns of local (Scheme people in their area on a wide range of issues of public concern and making

2.1) representations to the local authority which is Dumfries & Galloway Council (DGC), other public sector bodies and private agencies on matters within their sphere of interest. This may also include the administration of Windfarm community benefit funds.

**3.2** Representation: The CC has a duty under statute to represent the views of its local community. It is vital that it reflects the broad spectrum of opinion and interests of all sections of its community. In order to fulfil its responsibilities as an effective representative, the CC shall:

- Inform the community of the work and decisions of the CC by posting agendas and draft minutes/approved minutes of their meetings in public places and, subject to the provisions contained within the Data Protection Act 1998, provide contact details of CC members.
- Circulate agendas and draft minutes/approved minutes of CC meetings to Community Councillors and Ward Members (local councillors), DGC's Area Framework staff (who will pass them to the Libraries, Information & Archives Service) and to any other interested parties who request them for a specific purpose. Agendas and draft minutes/approved minutes should be displayed for at least 7 calendar days before an ordinary meeting (this means a scheduled business meeting) and at least 14 calendar days before an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). Minutes should be clearly marked as to whether they are draft or approved.

Note: Where the CC wishes to hand in copies to the local library it should advise the Area Framework staff accordingly, to avoid duplication.

- Seek to broaden both representation and expertise by promoting Associate Membership of the CC to persons for specific projects/issues.
- Make particular efforts to encourage young people and other under-represented groups to attend/participate in CC meetings and to ensure equality of opportunity in the way the CC carries out its functions. Recognition should be given to the contribution of everyone participating in the work of the CC. The CC must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and ensure that equality of opportunity be given to every participant to have their knowledge, opinion, skills and experience taken into account.
- Maintain proper financial records and present financial reports at CC meetings, including in respect of monies received or spent as a Windfarm host community.
- Within one calendar month of the first meeting after every election, the CC shall provide DGC Area Framework staff with a written return including the full contact details for the CC's office bearers and Examiner(s) of Accounts. When contact details change in relation to any of its members, the CC should advise DGC in writing (which includes e-mail) within **one calendar month** of the change.

3.3 Consultation with the community: The CC will encourage and facilitate consultation with the community to ensure the CC validly represents their views.
 (Scheme 2.3) Depending on the issue, methods can include public meetings, community surveys, comment or suggestion boxes, as well as clear agendas and minutes.

**3.4 Other activities:** The CC may carry out other activities that are in the general (Scheme 2.5) **Other activities:** The CC may carry out other activities that are in the general interests of the communities it represents, provided these activities fall within the objects of the Scheme.

3.5 Governance: In carrying out their activities CCs must at all times adhere to the law, the terms of the Scheme and the Code of Conduct at Schedule 2. If a CC handles personal information it is required to register for data protection with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), unless the CC can prove to the ICO that it is exempt. Notification is a legal requirement and failure to notify is a criminal offence.

3.6 Independent complaints procedure: At an ordinary meeting the CC may choose to adopt the independent complaints procedure as per Appendix 11 of the Scheme.
 (Scheme 2.8) The document and associated paperwork are available from www.dumgal.gov.uk/communitycouncils.

### 4.0 AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION AND STANDING ORDERS

**4.1 Constitution:** Each CC is required to adopt or amend its Constitution within 3 (Scheme 3.1) AGM, signed/dated at the meeting then approved in writing by DGC.

4.2 Standing Orders: Community Councils may adopt Standing Orders (model at Appendix 13), at an AGM or EGM. The Standing Orders do not require to be approved by DGC; however they must comply with the Scheme.

- 5.0 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS & PAYMENT OF EXPENSES
- 5.1 Membership: Schedule 1 contains the *maximum permitted number of members with voting rights* and any request to change these numbers must be made during a

(Scheme Periodic Review. Maximum permitted membership may be made up as follows: 5.1)

• Candidates elected at an ordinary election (contested or uncontested) up to the maximum permitted membership. In this case if there are fractions when calculating membership numbers, these should be rounded up. For example, if the maximum permitted membership is 7, half would be 4 members.

Candidates co-opted in accordance with the process in 5.3 and 5.4 of the Scheme, subject to the co-opted members not exceeding HALF of the maximum permitted membership. In this case if there are fractions when calculating membership numbers, these should be rounded down. For example, if the maximum permitted membership is 7, half would be 3 members.

The maximum permitted number of Community Councillors for the CC is:

5.2 Qualification for membership and term of office: The minimum age to stand for election as a Community Councillor is 16 years and candidates wishing to stand for election must reside within that CC area and be named on the current register of electors for that area on the date of being proposed for membership.

Should a Community Councillor cease to be named on the current register of electors for that area, they must cease to be a Community Councillor. However, if a Community Councillor leaves the CC area but retains their main residence within the CC area and continues to be named on the current register of electors for that area and **no other area** in the UK, they may continue to be a Community Councillor provided they can fulfil the requirements for meeting attendance.

Note: legislation does not permit the details for 16 year olds to appear on the register of electors. As a result the Returning Officer would have to contact DGC Assessor and Electoral Registration staff to confirm whether a 16 year old had applied to be registered.

The term of office for elected members of the CC shall extend from one ordinary election to the next ordinary election and all Community Councillors shall demit office at 8am on the day after the date set for ordinary elections. Provided they still meet the qualifications for election, Community Councillors shall be entitled to be nominated for re-election.

5.3 Co-opted members (with voting rights): Co-opted members must be eligible for membership (as per section 5.2 of the Scheme) and must be elected at an ordinary meeting, AGM or EGM by a two-thirds majority of the current voting membership of the CC. Public notice of any proposed co-option must be given at least 7 calendar days prior to the meeting at which the matter will be decided and the agenda and draft/approved minutes must include the name and address of each proposed Community Councillor and their proposer. Co-opted members are CC members as per section 5.1 of the Scheme. Such co-opted members shall have voting rights and serve until the next round of elections i.e. all co-opted members with voting rights shall demit office at 8am on the day after the election (ordinary or by-election) but may be nominated for election.

5.4 Number of co-opted members (with voting rights): The number of co-opted members with voting rights will be determined by the number of vacancies in relation to the maximum permitted membership of the CC, and must not exceed HALF of the maximum permitted membership of the CC. If there are fractions when calculating membership numbers, these should be rounded down. For example, if the maximum permitted number is 7, half would be 3 members.

5.5a Associate members (no voting rights): Associate members do not need to reside within the CC area and may be appointed (see 5.5b for appointment process) where there is a need for individuals with particular skills or knowledge or, for example, persons under 16 years of age. These individuals do NOT have voting rights and will NOT be counted in terms of meeting a quorum or towards the maximum permitted number of CC members. Associate members may serve for a fixed period (determined by the CC) or for the term of office of the CC that has appointed them. Associate members may also include representatives from other constituted local voluntary organisations.

5.5b Associate members must be elected at an ordinary meeting, AGM or EGM by a two (Scheme 5.5b) thirds majority of the current voting membership of the CC. The agenda and draft/approved minutes must include the name and address of each proposed Associate Member and their proposer.

5.6 Ex-officio members (no voting rights): The elected Members of DGC whose area of representation includes any part of the CC area shall be *ex-officio* members, with no entitlement to vote, propose/second motions or amendments, hold office or be a representative or delegate on its behalf.

5.7 Expenses: All Community Councillors may be reimbursed from CC funds for reasonable expenses incurred in performing the duties of their posts. Where any Community Councillor is authorised to attend a meeting, they shall be entitled to expenses and subsistence at the current DGC rate for elected Members (available from <a href="http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1933&p=0">http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1933&p=0</a>). The Secretary and Treasurer, if not members of the CC, may receive an honorarium or be salaried.

**5.8 Employees:** The CC may appoint such other employees as it determines, provided (Scheme that no CC member shall hold any paid office under the CC. 5.8)

# 6.0 OFFICE BEARERS

- 6.1 At the first meeting of the CC after an election or by-election and thereafter at the AGM, the CC shall elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and other such
- (Scheme 6.1) office bearers as it shall decide. The Chair and Vice Chair shall not be eligible to be elected for other positions on the CC. The Secretary and Treasurer need NOT be a member of the CC, in which case they shall have NO voting rights, and be entitled to speak only on matters relating to their function as an office bearer. If the Secretary or Treasurer is a CC member and demits office as such a member they may retain office until a successor is appointed.

6.2 Election of office bearers and term of office: Office bearers should be elected at a meeting as described in paragraph 6.1 and it is suggested as good practice that no one person may hold the same office bearer position for more than four consecutive years. To propose a nominee for office bearer, the proposer must be present at the meeting. If there is more than one nominee for the same position and a vote is required, proxy voting is not permitted. When a person nominated for office is unable
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to attend the meeting, the nominee must confirm in writing to the Returning Officer (or CC Secretary if there is one in place) at least one working day before the meeting that they are willing to accept office if elected. Office bearers shall serve until the next AGM and shall be eligible for re-election at the next AGM, provided they still meet the eligibility requirements for election at sections **5** and **6.2** of the Scheme. If an office bearer position becomes vacant the CC may appoint, at its next ordinary meeting, a temporary replacement to serve until the next AGM.

6.3 The Chair shall be responsible for ensuring that CC meetings are properly conducted
 (Scheme 6.3) in accordance with the Scheme; and shall be responsible for submitting a written report on the CC's activities for the previous year to the AGM.

6.4 The Secretary shall arrange all CC meetings (except the first meeting of the CC following an election or by-election); undertake all correspondence arising from the work of the CC; prepare the minutes of meetings and make a true record of proceedings for distribution to members, DGC and others; and undertake other duties required by the CC from time to time.

6.5 The Treasurer shall correctly maintain the CC's financial records which shall disclose (Scheme 6.5)
 6.5 the CC's financial position. The Treasurer shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that monies due are received and creditors paid; present financial information to the CC when required and prepare annually a statement of accounts.

6.6 Removal of office bearers: In the event that an office bearer is not performing their duties to the CC's satisfaction, a motion to remove that office bearer from their post can be considered at a CC meeting, provided that notice has been given on the agenda for the meeting and the office bearer concerned has been given reasonable opportunity of being heard. The motion shall require a proposer and seconder and, if the motion is passed by a two-thirds majority of the current voting membership of the CC, then the office bearer will be deemed to have been removed from that post and the post will require to be filled as the next item of business at that meeting.

# 7.0 DISQUALIFICATION OF MEMBERSHIP

7.1 CC membership is invalidated should a Community Councillor's residency qualification within that CC area cease to exist. If any CC member fails to attend at least HALF of the scheduled CC meetings in any financial year (with or without submitting apologies) the CC will terminate their membership. At the discretion of individual CCs, a 6 month period of leave of absence for CC members may be granted at any meeting of the CC.

# 8.0 MEETINGS

8.1 First meeting: The first meeting following a CC ordinary or by-election and upon the establishment of a CC will be called by the Returning Officer (RO) and will take place within a calendar month of the date of the election. Failure to hold the first meeting within this timescale shall result in dissolution of the CC. The RO must chair the first meeting until a Chair has been appointed, after which the new Chair shall preside over the meeting. See Appendix 10 of the Scheme for the agenda.

8.2 Frequency of meetings: This will be determined by the CC, subject to a minimum of one AGM and 5 ordinary meetings being held each year (an ordinary meeting is a scheduled business meeting). The AGM shall be held in a month of each year to be determined by the CC. Dates, times and venues of ordinary meetings shall be fixed at the first meeting of the CC following elections and thereafter at its AGM. Should the CC not hold meetings on 2 consecutive occasions, DGC Area Framework Constitution
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staff will take steps to ascertain the reasons why, to try to avoid dissolution. Failure to hold the minimum number of meetings each year shall result in dissolution of the CC.

The AGM shall be held in the month of

8.3 Quorum: The quorum for ALL CC meetings shall be one-third of the current voting membership of the CC and, if there is a fraction when calculating the number, this should be rounded up. For example, if the current voting membership is 7, one-third would be 3 members. Co-opted members with voting rights may be counted for the purposes of the quorum.

8.4 Voting: With the exception of circumstances which may arise under the Scheme (section 14 - Dissolution) all decisions of the CC will be decided by a simple majority of those eligible to vote and present and voting. Only CC members with voting rights may vote at ordinary meetings. Members of the public have <u>no</u> voting rights at any CC meeting – see section 8.5a. If a vote results in a majority not being achieved, the Chair shall have a casting vote. All motions or amendments shall be moved and seconded.

#### 8.5 Public attendance and their voting rights:

8.5a All meetings of the CC and its committees shall be open to members of the public, including members of the Press where they wish to attend. Proper provision should be made for the accommodation of the public and they should have the opportunity to address the CC, under the guidance of the Chair. Members of the public have <u>no</u> voting rights at any CC meeting. Where the public cause disruption to a meeting of the CC the Chair has the right to ask the person(s) to leave. Should the person(s) fail to leave, the Chair has the right to adjourn the meeting.

8.5b Private meetings: The CC can meet to discuss items of business in private where it considers it appropriate to do so. The decision to meet in private will be agreed in advance and decided by a majority vote. Notice of such a meeting will be given to the public in the usual way. However, the notice will record that the meeting, or a part of it, shall be held in private. Any decisions taken in private, together with the reason for taking the decision in private, shall be recorded in the minute and reported to the next meeting of the CC.

8.6 AGM agenda: AGM agendas shall include items for receiving an annual report from the Chair; the appointment of office bearers; the independently examined and certified Statement of Accounts; provisions for considering any amendments to the Constitution and/or Standing Orders (if necessary) and any other business which can be competently dealt with at an AGM. Fourteen calendar days' public notice is required before an AGM.

### 8.7 Extraordinary General Meetings: An EGM may be called:

- On the request of the Chair of the CC
- On the request of at least **one-third** of the current voting membership or
- (Scheme 10.7)
- On the request of **20** electors for the CC area.

The meeting shall be held within **21** calendar days of the Secretary's receipt of a request. The reason for holding the EGM must be clearly stated in the notice calling the meeting. It will only be necessary to call such a meeting if the subject matter of the request cannot be dealt with at the next ordinary meeting of the CC. **Fourteen calendar days**' public notice is required before an EGM.

8.8 **Committees:** A CC may arrange for the discharge of any of its functions by a committee. When a committee is established, details of the membership and terms of reference shall be included in the minutes of the CC. If a committee is appointed to (Scheme 10.8) discharge any of the functions of the CC a majority of the committee members shall be elected members of the CC. Decisions may be made by the Committee and reported back to the next CC meeting. Meetings of such committees shall be open to the general public as observers. Where a working party is formed which has no decision making powers but rather will make recommendations to the CC, it will not be necessary to hold those meetings in public.

8.9 Approval of minutes: Ordinary meeting minutes shall be approved at the next ordinary meeting; AGM minutes shall be approved at the next AGM and EGM minutes (Scheme 10.9) shall be approved at the next OM (ordinary meeting).

8.10 **Decisions:** A decision taken at any meeting of the CC or its committees may not be changed within 6 calendar months of the date of the meeting unless the Chair rules (Scheme that there has been a material change of circumstances and notice has been given of 10.10) the proposed change in the agenda for the meeting.

8.11 **Conduct of meetings:** The CC shall abide by the Code of Conduct and its Standing Orders, if any, for the proper conduct of its meetings. (Scheme

10.11) 9.0

# **RESOURCING A COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

9.1 Funds: All monies raised by or on behalf of the CC or provided by DGC and other (Scheme sources shall be used to further the statutory purposes, role and responsibilities of the 12.1) CC and for no other purpose.

9.2 Financial year: This shall be provided for in the Constitution of each CC and shall be (Scheme from 1 April to 31 March (or as agreed by the CC below) to allow for the proper submission of an independently certified statement of accounts to the CC's AGM on a 12.2) specified date.

> The CC's financial year shall be from 1 April to 31 March [or delete this and put what your Community Council has agreed]

9.3 Authorised signatories: The Community Council shall nominate at least three unrelated office bearers to act as signatories to the CC bank account. All cheques (Scheme and withdrawals should require two from three signatories. Any changes to the 12.3) authorised signatories should be approved and minuted by the Community Council.

The CC's authorised signatories are the following office bearer posts:

#### 9.4 Independently examined accounts:

9.4a The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of CC finances, and annual accounts shall be examined (and certified) by a person appointed by the CC who is independent of (Scheme the CC. A copy of the independently examined accounts shall be submitted for 12.4a) approval to the Community Council's AGM and forwarded to DGC's Area Framework staff within 7 calendar days of the AGM.

9.4b The Area Framework staff may, at their discretion and in consultation with DGC's Head of Finance, require the CC to produce such records, vouchers and accounts (Scheme 26 June 2014 Constitution

12.4b) books as DGC considers are required. If there is suspected financial impropriety, DGC has the right to commission a financial governance audit of the CC (to be carried out by DGC's internal auditors) or other type of independent financial review of the CC (to be carried out by DGC's external auditors). DGC's internal/external auditors will require access to the CC's records, its accounts and financial arrangements so that the auditors may follow the trail of public money from DGC through the CC to its final destination.

# 9.5 Discretionary grant:

**9.5a** DGC shall provide an annual grant to CCs to be used at their discretion to further the (Scheme CC's statutory purposes, role and responsibilities and for no other purpose.

12.5a)

9.5b Agendas and minutes should be sent to DGC's Area Framework staff within these timescales: agenda and draft minutes no less than 7 calendar days before an ordinary meeting, 14 calendar days before an AGM or EGM; and approved minutes 7 calendar days after the meeting at which they were agreed. Failure to do so may result in all or part of the discretionary grant being withheld, or repayment of all or part of it.

**9.6 Other DGC grants:** The CC shall be eligible to apply for grants for suitable projects (Scheme through DGC's grant system, in accordance with local priorities and eligibility criteria.

12.6)

9.7 Community benefit funds: Where the CC is responsible for the administration of Windfarm community benefit monies, or any other community funds, a complete audit trail should be kept of all such financial transactions. The receipts and payments should be included in the CC's annual financial statement and distinguished from other activities therein. If any question arises about the receipt or use of community benefit funds, the CC should seek to agree any proposed use of funds with the developer in advance or seek its own legal advice before committing itself financially.

# 10.0 INSURANCE AND THE LIABILITY OF COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

**10.1** DGC shall ensure best value for CCs in relation to their public liability insurance cover. To put insurance liability cover into place the Community Council Liaison

(Scheme Officer (CCLO) needs to advise the insurance underwriter that this is required for 13.1) individual CCs. Public liability insurance includes cover for the community resilience activities that are contained within the CC's **agreed** community resilience plan. Once the insurance underwriter has confirmed that insurance cover is agreed, the CC will be informed. Should a CC have any doubt as to the appropriateness of its insurance cover, it may decide to withdraw from the 'blanket' scheme and make arrangements for its own insurance - in this case the CC must inform DGC's Area Framework staff.

10.2 It is for individual CCs to assure themselves over the level of cover that they have, and they must ensure they take out additional insurance cover for other activities not covered by the 'blanket' policy, either with the existing insurance provider or an alternative insurance provider.

# 11.0 DISSOLUTION

11.1 Community Council decision to dissolve: If the CC decides (by a majority of the current voting membership) that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve, it shall agree a date for a public meeting to be held to discuss the proposed resolution to dissolve. Not less than 14 calendar days prior to the date of such meeting the CC must place a public Notice of Meeting in the local newspaper. If the resolution is supported by a majority of those persons present and eligible to vote, the CC shall be deemed to be dissolved and all assets (property and funds) as are held in trust or under the CC's Constitution

control at the date of dissolution (**after** the satisfaction of any proper debts or liabilities) shall transfer to DGC who shall hold same in trust for a future CC representing that area. The liability of all members and office bearers of the former CC shall cease on the transfer of assets and the submission of satisfactory certified accounts for the final period of operation of the former CC to DGC.

Note: All assets except where provision is made in the Constitution for assets to be managed or held by another constituted group.

11.2 For the avoidance of doubt, should a new CC be established within 4 years of the date of dissolution all such assets which had been transferred to, and held in trust by, DGC shall be transferred to the new CC along with the transfer of liability to all members and office bearers who have voting rights.

11.3 Should a CC fail to be re-established within 4 years of the date of dissolution, all assets including money held in bank, building society etc. accounts may be disposed of by Dumfries & Galloway Council for such community or charitable purposes in the former CC area as DGC, in its sole discretion, decides.

11.4 Certified statement of assets and liabilities: Following dissolution (for any reason)
 (Scheme 14.4) the former CC must produce a certified statement of assets and liabilities and submit this to DGC within 4 calendar weeks of the date of dissolution.

11.5 Inadequate number of Community Councillors: Where the number of CC members falls below the minimum specified in section 5 of the Scheme, the CC must inform DGC in writing immediately. DGC shall, by suspending the CC's Constitution, cause the CC to be dissolved. On dissolution, all assets (property and funds) as are held in trust or under the control of the CC at the date of dissolution (after the satisfaction of any proper debts or liabilities) shall transfer to DGC which shall hold same in trust for a future CC representing that area. Sections 14.1 to 14.4 of the Scheme provide further information regarding assets and liability of members.

11.6 Failure to hold sufficient ordinary meetings: Should a CC fail to hold a meeting for a period of 2 consecutive scheduled meeting dates, or its membership falls below the prescribed minimum for a period of 2 consecutive scheduled meeting dates, (during which time the Community Council and the local authority have taken action to address the situation), the local authority shall take action to dissolve the CC.

11.7 Failure to hold an AGM: Should the CC fail to hold an AGM in any financial year, DGC will investigate the reasons why an AGM has not been held and seek
 (Scheme 14.6) (Scheme 14.6)

# 12.0 TITLE TO PROPERTY

12.1 Property and other assets belonging to the CC shall be entrusted to those office bearers who have voting rights and their successors in these offices.
15.1)
12.2 If a Community Council wishes to transfer its property to another individual or group the CC should seek its own independent legal advice on this matter.
15.2)

[CC may add further detail here about the transfer of assets]

# ADOPTION AND APPROVAL OF THIS CONSTITUTION This Constitution was adopted by

Community Council on
date of Annual/Extraordinary General Meeting (delete Annual or Extraordinary as appropriate)
Signature of Chair
PRINT name of Chair
Signature of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Office Bearer
PRINT name of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Office Bearer
PRINT title of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Office Bearer e.g. Treasurer
and was approved on behalf of Dumfries and Galloway Council by
Signature of Monitoring Officer
PRINT name of Monitoring Officer
Date signed by Monitoring Officer