



CONSTITUTION OF THE MAIDSTONE YOUTH FORUM



CONSTITUTION

MAIDSTONE YOUTH FORUM

1: NAME

The name of this organisation is "The Maidstone Youth Forum" or "MYF" for short.

2: OBJECTIVES

To provide young people aged 11 – 21 years with a means by which they may influence the decision making processes of Maidstone Borough Council and other agencies and organisations that act locally.

The Youth Forum will be a consultee and lobbying body acting on behalf of young people living within the Borough.

The Maidstone Youth Forum will also run and develop not-for-profit projects and initiatives for young people in Maidstone.

The Youth Forum will also engage with the Borough Council and other agencies in order to consult and engage young people during the development of their plans, strategies and policies, thus providing an effective communications channel for the benefit of all young people in the Borough.

3: DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this constitution:

- Maidstone Youth Forum comprises young people, aged 11 – 21 years who represent young people within the Borough of Maidstone.
- Maidstone Borough Council is the Principal Authority established under the Local Government Act 1972 and associated secondary legislation.
- The Sports Play and Youth Development Team is a service provider within the Resources and Partnerships Directorate of Maidstone Borough Council.
- The MYF posts of Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members are officers of the Youth Forum. They are elected to those positions annually. They act as leaders of and ambassadors for the Youth Forum.
- The Maidstone Youth Forum shall take decisions by a majority vote whether by hands or secret ballot. If there is a split vote, the Leader has the casting decision.
- The Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Members or any member of the Maidstone Youth Forum can be voted out on a vote of No Confidence. This will only be invoked for a serious reason.
- The Maidstone Youth Forum can disband with a two-thirds majority on a vote of disbandment, as well as two adult members of the advisory group agreeing. All monies that the Maidstone Youth Forum has will then be allocated at the time of disbandment to other youth-orientated or local groups by the Community and Youth Development Officer in consultation with the Advisory Board.
- The Maidstone Youth Forum has power to appoint committees and to disband committees that will deal with issues that arise from time to time. These committees will agree their own times, frequency and locations of meetings.

- The Maidstone Youth Forum will provide the arena in which the interests of young people of Maidstone Borough can be promoted and campaigns initiated and co-ordinated.
- The Maidstone Youth Forum is intended to involve young people in local decision making and community activities and to improve links between young people and the community. The forum is committed to working with all young people regardless of gender, faith, race, disability or sexual orientation.
- The Maidstone Youth Forum is a non political organisation.
- The members of Maidstone Youth Forum must develop and review their own 'Rules of Engagement'.

4: RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Youth Forum members will:

- Read and understand the MYF constitution and agree to undertake their term of office accordingly
- Take their role and duty seriously when representing the Forum, both in and outside MYF meetings
- Ensure that mobile phones are either on silent or switched off during meetings
- When debating issues, attack the issue and not the individual.
- Communicate with others (whether they be adults or young people) within the framework and philosophy of equal opportunities
- Promote the Youth Forum in a way that will not harm the reputation of the organisation
- Actively engage with young people in their constituency and represent their views at a local, regional and national level
- Attend Youth Forum meetings, arriving on time and making sure that there are transport arrangements to and from the venue of the meeting
- Inform an adult support worker and send apologies if they are unable to attend a meeting
- When communicating in writing e.g. via a letter or email, remember to respect the views of others, be courteous at all times, use clear English and consider equal opportunities legislation. All letters etc. should be sent to Youth Forum Chair person, adult support worker or circulated to the Cabinet for approval (as appropriate)

5: MEMBERSHIP

- Members of the Youth Forum must be between the age of 11 and 21 years and attend school, college, work or reside in the Maidstone borough.
- Members are recruited to the Youth Forum annually. Recruitment is through local schools, youth clubs, community associations, local media and events/projects that are also run locally.
- Members remain in Membership of the Youth Forum for one year. Members may serve for a second and subsequent period.
- Members are expected to commit time to fortnightly meetings of the Youth Forum, in addition to becoming involved in projects and representing the Youth Forum as and when required.

6: MAIDSTONE YOUTH FORUM STRUCTURE

The Maidstone Youth Forum is made up as follows:

- Leader
- Deputy Leader
- Cabinet Members
- Members

The Leader and Deputy are elected by majority vote during the annual elections. The cabinet members will be appointed by the Leader and Deputy annually following the elections.

7: ELECTION PROCESS

Elections will take place in Maidstone Borough secondary schools, youth clubs and Maidstone town centre. Young people aged 11 to 21 who live, work or attend school or college in Maidstone are allowed to vote. The elections will take place in partnership with Kent Youth Service elections for Kent Youth Council and supported by Maidstone Borough Council Democratic Services Department, at their discretion.

Maidstone Youth Forum members must volunteer to do so and should not be compelled to attend. It is expected that representatives participating in the Maidstone Youth Forum will be willing to contribute to and attend as many meetings as possible. Attendees should also assume responsibility for reporting back to their individual schools, colleges youth clubs and other youth organisations.

8: OFFICER SUPPORT

The Community and Youth Development Officer will be responsible for:

- Supporting the Maidstone Youth Forum members in producing the agenda and notes for meetings
- Actively seeking representatives on the Forum from a wide range of young people within the borough
- Assisting young people who have difficulties in participating in the Forum
- Acting as an advocate for and promote the Forum
- Supporting and administering the election process
- Administering the Maidstone Youth Forum bank account

Other council officers will also, wherever possible, provide assistance to the Community and Youth Development Officer for specific projects or will give advice on particular areas such as IT facilities and financial matters. It should be noted that council officers have a number of other roles and responsibilities and any requests for support will be considered within this context.

9: THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE YOUTH FORUM

The Advisory Committee will consist of a minimum of two Youth Forum members, the Community and Youth Development Officer, the Sports Play and Youth Development Manager, and the Assistant Director of Customer Services and Partnerships who will be the chair. Other members of the Youth Forum may be invited to the Advisory Committee in consultation with the chair.

The Advisory Committee for Maidstone Youth Forum will:

- Meet quarterly
- Review the Youth Forum constitution annually to ensure relevance and appropriateness
- Receive a submitted annual report from the Youth Forum on its activities and expenditure and quarterly progress reports
- Monitor the activities and membership of the Youth Forum to ensure the terms of this constitution are being complied with
- Attend Youth Forum meetings upon request, act as an advisory body to the Youth Forum and advise and be consulted on projects and programmes being considered by the Youth Forum to ensure they are in line with council priorities.
- The Community and Youth Development Officer will be responsible for the day to day operation of the Youth Forum and will produce meeting notes following each meeting of the Youth Forum and Advisory Committee.

10: BUDGETS & ACCOUNTS

The Maidstone Youth Forum is provided each April with a basic budget from Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). In addition, the Maidstone Youth Forum may seek additional resources from other organisations, grants or through fundraising. All expenditure must be agreed by the Maidstone Youth Forum and must be authorised by the Leader, Deputy Leader and a designated council officer.

Responsibility for the administration of the Youth Forum bank account lies with the Community and Youth Development Officer. All monies received are to be paid into the Maidstone Youth Forum bank account held at the Giro bank or into such other banks as may be nominated by the Maidstone Youth Forum subject to the prior approval of the Director of Resources and Partnerships. Cheques for the payment of all accounts shall be signed by any two of four council officers. An annual statement of account must be presented with the annual report. The Community & Youth Development Officer shall be responsible for the expenditure incurred on Youth Forum activities including reasonable travel and subsistence expenses.

11: ANNUAL REPORT

Following the approval of the Advisory group, the annual report will be formally submitted to the Cabinet Member for Community Services at the end of each financial year, and the quarterly progress reports will be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Community Services each quarter for briefing purposes.

12: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

The above constitution shall only be altered by resolution passed by a majority of the members of the Advisory Committee in liaison with and after consultation with the Youth Forum.

11: DISSOLUTION

The Maidstone Youth Forum may decide at a Special Meeting that it not continue. In this event the Youth Forum shall recommend to the council that it be dissolved. If the council agrees to this, any property or monies of the Youth Forum remaining in the council's accounts, after paying its debts shall be put at the disposal of the Advisory Committee for re-allocation to the benefit of youth within Maidstone Borough.

Should the Council decide to withdraw support of funds and officer support to the Maidstone Youth Forum, and no other organisation wishes to support it, the Maidstone Youth Forum will disband.

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

Position:

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

Position: