

Constitution of Portobello Toddlers Hut adopted on 28/4/2016

Name

1. The name of the early years group is Portobello Toddlers Hut, hereinafter referred to as “the group”.

Objectives

2. The aim of the group is to advance the education and social development of pre-school children with the emphasis on the play experience, so that they take a constructive place in the community and also to support their parents and other appropriate persons.

In furtherance of the above aims, the group shall seek:

- a) To provide safe and satisfying group play and learning.
- b) To encourage other charitable activities through which the parents may support the development of children.

Powers

3. The group is a member of Early Years Scotland having accepted the aims of the organisation and paid the appropriate membership subscription. To further its objects the group has the following powers:
 - a) To provide accommodation and equipment.
 - b) To raise money to pay for the group’s activities including fixing and collecting fees payable for children attending the group.
 - c) To purchase, take on lease, hire or otherwise acquire, any property or rights which are suitable for the group’s activities.
 - d) To improve, manage, develop, or otherwise deal with, all or any part of the property and rights of the group.
 - e) To borrow money, and to give security in support of any such borrowings by the group.
 - f) To employ such staff as are considered appropriate for the proper conduct of the group’s activities.
 - g) To engage consultants and advisers as are considered appropriate from time to time.
 - h) To effect insurance of all kinds.
 - i) To invest any funds which are not immediately required for the group’s activities in such investments as may be considered appropriate (and to dispose of, and vary, such investments).
 - j) To liaise with other voluntary sector bodies, UK or Scottish government departments and agencies, and other bodies, all with a view to furthering the group’s objectives.
 - k) As a member of Early Years Scotland, send a representative to vote at the national Early Years Scotland Annual General Meeting.
 - l) To accept grants, donations and legacies of all kinds (and to accept any reasonable conditions attached to them).

- m) To do anything which is necessary or desirable to enable the group to achieve its objectives.

General Structure

- 4. The structure of the group shall consist of:

The MEMBERS – who have the right to attend the annual general meeting and (any special general meeting) and have important powers under the constitution; in particular the members elect people to serve on the management committee and take decisions in relation to the constitution itself.

The MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - who hold regular meetings during the period between annual general meetings, and manage and supervise the activities of the group; in particular, the management committee is responsible for the financial control of the group.

Qualifications for membership

- 5. Membership shall be open to:

- a) The parents or guardians of children on the attendance register of the group
- b) Any registered childminder or adult family carer who regularly accompanies a child on the register
- c) Any other person who has an expertise which would be of assistance to the management committee and group or that represent outside bodies with which the group has close contact.

- 6. An employee of the group shall not be eligible for membership; a person who becomes an employee of the group after admission to membership shall automatically cease to be a member.

Application for membership

- 7. Any person who wishes to become a member must sign, and lodge with the group, a written application for membership, in most cases this will be the application to enrol a child into the group.

Register of members

- 8. The management committee shall maintain a register of members, setting out the full name and address of each member, the date on which s/he was admitted to membership, and the date on which any person ceased to be a member. This register will be checked at annual intervals to verify who is no longer a member.

Withdrawal from membership

- 9. Any person who wishes to withdraw from membership shall sign, and lodge with the group, a written notice to that effect; on receipt of the notice by the group, s/he shall cease to be a member

Expulsion from membership

10. Any person may be expelled from membership by way of a resolution passed by a majority vote at a general meeting, providing the following procedures have been observed.
 - a) At least 21 days' notice of the intention to propose the resolution must be given to the member concerned, specifying the grounds for the proposed expulsion.
 - b) The member concerned shall be entitled to be heard on the resolution at the general meeting at which the resolution is proposed.

General Meetings (Meeting of Members)

11. The management committee shall convene an annual general meeting in March/ April of each year (apart from the year in which the group is formed).
12. The business of each annual general meeting shall include:
 - a) A report by the chair on the activities of the group.
 - b) The consideration and approval of the annual accounts of the group.
 - c) The appointment of an independent financial examiner.
 - d) The election/ re-election of members to the management committee.
 - e) Setting the attendance fees paid for children attending the group where applicable.
 - f) Setting the rates of staff pay.
13. The management committee or at least 6 members together may convene a special general meeting at any time.
14. In the event of the death or resignation of a committee member, the vacancy may be filled by a member co-opted by the committee. These vacancies may be filled until the succeeding Annual General Meeting.

Notice of General Meetings

15. At least 14 clear days' notice must be given in writing of any annual general meeting or special general meeting; the notice must indicate the general nature of any business to be dealt with at the meeting and, in the case of a resolution to alter the constitution, must set out the terms of the proposed alteration. Notice of every general meeting shall be given in writing to all the members of the group, and to all the members of the management committee.

Procedure at General Meetings

16. No business shall be dealt with at any general meeting unless a quorum is present; the quorum for a general meeting shall be 6 members present in person.
17. If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes after the time at which a general meeting was due to commence – or if, during a meeting, a quorum ceases to be present – the meeting

shall stand adjourned to such time and place as may be fixed by the chairperson of the meeting.

18. The group's chairperson shall preside as chairperson of each general meeting; if the chair is not present within 15 minutes after the time at which the meeting was due to commence, the members of the management committee present at the meeting shall elect from among themselves the person who will act as chairperson of that meeting.
19. Every member shall have one vote, which (whether on a show of hands or on a secret ballot) must be given personally.
20. If there are an equal number of votes for and against any resolution, the chairperson of the meeting shall be entitled to a casting vote.
21. A resolution put to the vote at a general meeting shall be decided on a show of hands unless a secret ballot is demanded by the chairperson (or by at least two members present in person at the meeting); a secret ballot may be demanded either before the show of hands takes place, or immediately after the result of the show of hands is declared. The result of the secret ballot shall be declared at the meeting.

Eligibility

22. A person shall not be eligible for election/ appointment to the management committee unless he/ she is a member of the group.

Termination of office

23. A member of the management committee shall automatically vacate office if:-
 - a) S/he becomes debarred under any statutory provision from being a charity trustee.
 - b) S/he becomes incapable for medical reasons of fulfilling the duties his/ her office and such incapacity is expected to continue for a period of more than six months.
 - c) S/he ceases to be a member of the group.
 - d) S/he becomes an employee of the group.
 - e) S/he resigns office by notice to the group.
 - f) S/he is absent (without permission of the management committee) from more than three consecutive meetings of the management committee, and the management committee resolve to remove him/ her from office.

Office Bearers

24. The management committee members shall elect from among themselves a chair, a treasurer and a secretary, and such other office bearers (if any) as they consider appropriate.
25. All of the office bearers shall cease to hold office at the conclusion of each annual general meeting, but shall then be eligible for re-election. Committee members shall be entitled to serve for no more than three consecutive years.

Powers of Management Committee

26. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution, the group, its assets and undertakings shall be managed by the management committee, who may exercise all the powers of the group.
27. A meeting of the management committee at which a quorum is present may exercise all powers exercisable by the management committee.
28. The management committee may co-opt up to two members at any one time. Co-opted members shall have a vote.

Personal interests

29. A member of the management committee who has a personal interest in any transaction or other arrangement which the group is proposing to enter into, must declare that interest at a meeting of the management committee; s/he will be debarred (in terms of clause 38) from voting on the question of whether or not the group should enter into that arrangement.
30. For the purposes of clause 29, a person shall be deemed to have a personal interest in an arrangement if any partner or other close relative of his/hers, or any firm of which s/he is a partner, or any limited company of which s/he is a substantial shareholder or director, has a personal interest in that arrangement.
31. Provided that s/he has declared his/her interest and has not voted on the question of whether or not the group should enter into the relevant arrangement. A management committee member will not be debarred from entering into an arrangement with the group in which he/ she has a personal interest (or is deemed to have a personal interest under clause 30) and may retain any personal benefit which he/ she gains from his/ her participation in that arrangement.
32. No member of the management committee may serve as an employee (full time/ part time) of the group, and no member of the management committee may be given any remuneration by the group for carrying out his/ her duties as a member of the management committee.
33. The members of the management committee may be paid all travelling and other expenses reasonably incurred by them in connection with their attendance at the meeting, or otherwise in connection with the carrying out of their duties.

Procedure at Management Committee Meetings

34. Any member of the management committee may call a meeting of the management committee or request the secretary to call a meeting of the management committee.

35. Matters arising at a meeting of the management committee which require a decision shall be decided by a majority of votes; if an equality of votes arises, the chairperson of the meeting shall have a casting vote.
36. No business shall be dealt with at a meeting of the management committee unless a quorum is present; the quorum for meetings of the management committee shall be a third of the members of the management committee including any two office bearers.
37. The management committee may, at its discretion, allow any person who they reasonably consider appropriate, to attend and speak at any meeting of the management committee; these persons shall not be entitled to vote however.
38. A management committee member shall not vote at a management committee meeting (or at a meeting of a committee) on any resolution concerning a matter in which s/he has a personal interest which conflicts (or may conflict) with the interests of the group; s/he must withdraw from the meeting while an item of that nature is being dealt with.
39. For the purposes of clause 38, a person shall be deemed to have a personal interest in a particular matter if any partner or other close relative of his/ hers or any firm of which she/ he is a partner or any limited company of which he/ she is a substantial shareholder director, has a personal interest in that matter.

Conduct of Members of the Management Committee

40. Each of the members of the management committee shall, in exercising his/ her functions as a member of the management committee of the group, act in the interests of the group; and in particular must:
 - a) Seek, in good faith, to ensure that the group acts in a manner which is in accordance with its objects (as set out in this constitution).
 - b) Act with the care and diligence which it is reasonable to expect of a person who is managing the affairs of another person.
 - c) In circumstances giving rise to the possibility of a conflict of interest between the group and any other party put the interests of the group before that of the other party, in taking decisions as a member of the management committee.
 - d) Ensure that the group complies with any direction, requirement, notice or duty imposed on it by the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Operation of Accounts and Holding of Property

41. The signatures of two authorised signatories, appointed by the management committee, shall be required in relation to the retrieval/transfer of funds from the 'Portobello Toddler Hut Playgroup No 2' bank account with at least one of the signatories being a member of the

management committee. Funds can be lodged with only one signatory. The signatures of only one of the authorised signatories appointed by the management committee shall be required in relation to all operations for the 'Portobello Toddlers Hut Playgroup' daily running bank account. Additionally the 'Portobello Toddlers Hut Playgroup' daily running account can be accessed and payments managed in an online capacity by the appointed agent of the management committee (the administrator).

42. The title to all property (including any land or buildings, the tenants interest under any lease and (so far as appropriate) any investments) shall be held either in the name of 'Portobello Toddlers Hut Playgroup Management Committee' or in the name of a nominee company holding such property in trust for the group; any group or body in whose name the group's property is held shall act in accordance with the directions issued from time to time by the management committee.

Minutes

43. The management committee shall ensure that minutes are made of all the proceedings at all types of meeting; a minute of any meeting shall include the names of those present, and shall be signed and dated by the chairperson of the meeting.

Accounting Records and Annual Accounts

44. The management committee shall ensure that proper accounting records are maintained in accordance with all the applicable statutory requirements. At each meeting of the committee the treasurer will present an up to date written statement of the accounts to the committee. Bank statements should also be available for inspection.
45. The management committee or an agent of the management committee shall prepare annual accounts, complying with all the relevant statutory requirements; if an audit is required under any statutory provisions, they shall ensure that an audit is carried out by a qualified auditor or by a capable independent examiner where an audit is deemed unnecessary.

Dissolution

46. If the management committee determine that it is necessary that the group is dissolved, it shall convene a general meeting of the members; not less than 21 days' notice of the meeting (stating the terms of the proposed resolution) shall be given.
47. If a proposal by the management committee to dissolve the group is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at the general meeting, the management committee shall have power to dispose of any assets held by or on behalf of the group – and any assets remaining after satisfaction of the debts and liabilities of the group shall be transferred to the Early Years Scotland with its charitable objects or some other charitable body having objects similar to those of the group; the identity of the body or bodies to which such assets are transferred shall be determined by the group members at, or prior to, the

time of dissolution. With permission of Early Years Scotland, tangible assets e.g. toys can be passed on to another pre school group with charitable purposes.

48. For the avoidance of doubt, no part of the income or property of the group shall (otherwise than in pursuance of the group's charitable objects) be paid or transferred (directly or indirectly) to the members, either in the course of the group's existence or on dissolution.

Alterations to the Constitution

49. Subject to clause 50, the constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of those present and voting at a general meeting, providing due notice of the meeting, and of the resolution, is given in accordance with clause 15.
50. No amendment to clauses 2, 3, 47 or 48 of the constitution may be made if the effect would be that the group would cease to be a charity.

Interpretation

51. For the purpose of this constitution, "charitable" shall be interpreted as charitable within the meaning ascribed to it in terms of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and also in terms of the Taxes Acts, including any statutory amendment or re-enactment for the time being in force.