



# The Constitution of the Foyle Multicultural Forum

**Definition:** *Multicultural in this context refers to the bringing together of the many cultures and cultural groups that exist in Northern Ireland society, (particularly within the Foyle District) to help build a better and more positive future for all.*

## 1. Aims

The aims of the Foyle Multicultural Forum are to:

- Support ethnic minority voluntary groups in their growth and in developing their ability to offer services.
- Bring together its member individuals and groups for a collective, stronger voice.
- Share experience and ideas on how to provide services to the Ethnic minority communities in a way which meets their needs as a community and in a way which is free from discrimination and promote diversity.
- Help people from ethnic minorities to live and work in this region by offering a range of support services and programmes that reduce problems and issues while improving the quality of their lives.
- Support ethnic minority service users, agencies and voluntary sector representatives in being a part of local planning, development, evaluation and monitoring as part of a consultation process.
- Discuss issues relevant to and affecting the Ethnic minority community e.g. health and social services, council services, education and training, employment, emigration and visas, accommodation, and other services provided by the private, public and voluntary sectors.
- Work in partnership with the local authority, employers, health agencies, PSNI and voluntary sector partners to aid the development of services which respond to local needs.
- To network as a forum for sharing ideas and good practice, the increased importance of co-ordinating activity designed to support race and ethnic equality with other diversity initiatives.

## 2. Objectives

To create opportunities to:

- Bring together people of different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.
- Bring together all generations.
- Bring together people from all geographical areas/wards of the North West Region of Ireland and chosen projects as agreed by the Forum members.
- Foster the development of group cohesion and a sense of pride in all of our members.
- Bring funds, and develop a fund raising strategy, to the group's chosen projects and to undertake the above.

- Through displays, exhibitions, workshops and/or performances, which support the work of the Forum.

### **3. Membership**

- Full membership is open to all people who live and/or work in the North West of Ireland region and share the above aims and objectives of the Foyle Multicultural Forum (referred to hereafter as the Forum).
- Qualification to Full membership, i.e. with voting rights, will be by application form accompanied by agreed proof of identity.
- Honorary membership may be conferred by members at the Annual General Meeting but honorary members will not hold voting rights.
- Membership will be terminated should an individual transgress the aims and objectives of the Forum provided that the person shall have the right to be heard by the Committee before the final decision is made.
- In any dispute over individual membership, there shall be a right of appeal to an independent arbitrator appointed by mutual agreement.

### **4. Officers & Committee**

- The Committee will consist of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 7 Ordinary members, including 4 Officers.
- Elections to the post of Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Press/Publicity officer will be held annually at the Annual General Meeting by a simple majority of the voting membership (51%) present at the meeting.
- No person should hold the same post on the Committee for more than 3 years.
- All members should have the right to vote, nominate and be eligible for election, provided that the person has been registered for at least 6 months prior to the AGM when the election takes place.
- Officers of the Committee may not gain financially from the work of the Forum.
- All elections will be held by secret ballot.
- Members of the Committee, other than officers, who may gain financially from the work of the Forum should not be present during discussion about payments or contracts with the Forum and must relinquish their voting rights.
- The Committee must be composed such that the majority will not gain financially from the Forum.
- Other members and officers may be co-opted as necessary. Co-opted officers will not necessarily be full members of the Forum.
- Motions of censure may be proposed by at least two Committee members in order to institute disciplinary or dismissal procedures.
- Vacancies may be filled by election at the next General Meeting.
- Officers and Members of the Committee may receive reimbursement of agreed expenses when accompanied by relevant receipts.
- Committee members who do not attend for more than 3 consecutive meetings without due cause may be deemed by the Committee to have resigned.

- The Committee may set up sub-committees, when necessary, to deal with specific issues.
- The Committee has power to raise funds and employ staff and operate an equal opportunities policy.

## **5. Unilateral Action**

- No member of the Forum shall act unilaterally on behalf of the Forum.
- When an Officer of the Forum is presented with urgent action to be taken they should consult the Chair or Secretary and at least one other officer, when practicable, and report the action to the next Committee or General meeting for endorsement.

## **6. Finances**

- The Treasurer is required to administer a bank account and keep proper accounts to be presented to the Annual General Meeting.
- Cheques must be signed by a Member and at least one other Officer of the Committee.  
The Committee will have the right to inspect the accounts at any reasonable time.  
All money raised by or on behalf of the Forum shall be applied to further the objectives of the Forum and for no other purpose.
- The repayment of any out-of-pocket expenses must be authorised by the Committee in advance and will only be paid against relevant receipts.
- Competent auditors will be elected at the AGM and given the power to see all the accounts, the minutes of meetings and bank statements.
- Auditors have the right to be notified of any general meeting
- Auditors may not be appointed if they are Committee members, employees, trustees or relatives of the above.
- Any payment above £500 must be authorised by the Committee in advance in accordance with any financial procedures policies adopted by the group at a quadrate meeting.
- The forum will be open to lending and borrowing money as required for the delivery of its services

## **7. General & Annual General Meetings**

- There will be a minimum of six Committee meetings and two General meetings per annum.
- Motions and resolutions must be received by the Secretary at least 10 days before the next meeting.
- At least 7 days notice of the business of the meeting must be given by the Secretary.
- The date is to be displayed publicly at least 14 days in advance.
- The AGM will be held annually and will be called by the Secretary giving 14 days notice of the business.
- The date will be displayed publicly at least 14 days in advance.
- A Special or Extraordinary Meeting may be called by a minimum of 8

members, to discuss items of particular concern.

- Such a meeting must only deal with the issue at hand.

## **8. Rules of Procedure at all Meetings**

- In voting, any question arising at a meeting of the Forum or one of its committees shall be decided by a simple majority of those present and voting.
- No member shall exercise more than one vote. The Chair shall not normally vote except in cases of an equality of votes when the Chair shall have the casting vote.
- One third of the members with the power to vote shall form a quorum at meetings of the General Committee and all other Committees.
- Ten members with power to vote or one third of the members with power to vote, whichever is the less, shall form a quorum at General Meetings of the Forum.
- In the event that no quorum is present at an Annual General Meeting of the Forum, the meeting shall stand adjourned and be reconvened 14-21 days later, and those members present at that meeting shall be deemed to form a quorum.
- Minute books shall be kept by the Forum, the General Committee and all other committees and the appropriate.
- Secretary shall enter therein a record of all proceedings and resolutions. Minutes should be available to all members for inspection except when dealing with matters of employment.

## **9. Amendments to the Constitution**

- Only at the AGM, or at a special meeting operating under the same rules as the AGM, can a decision be taken to change the constitution.
- To make an amendment or change to the constitution, notice of the Motion must be given as in 6.2 above, the vote being passed by a two-thirds majority.
- Paragraphs 8.1, 9.1, 9.2 cannot be changed.

## **10. Dissolution**

- The power to dissolve the Forum resides with the members and must be taken at a Special or AGM by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting.
- If a decision to dissolve the Forum is taken, according to the rules of procedure above, the Committee shall have the power to dispose of any assets held by or in the name of the Forum.
- Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be transferred to a group existing within the City which shares similar objective to those of the Forum.

## **11. Standing Orders**

- The Committee shall have power to adopt and issue Standing Orders for the conduct of the Forum.
- Such Standing Orders shall come into operation immediately, provided always that they shall be subject to review by the Forum in General Meeting and that they shall be consistent with the provisions of this constitution.

***This constitution was adopted as the Constitution of the Foyle Multicultural Forum at a Public Meeting held in the One World Centre 7/15 Foyle Street – Derry/Londonderry BT48 AL on the 18/05/2007.***