WORTHING BUSINESS CIRCLE

Constitution 2026

1. Name

1.1. The club is called WORTHING BUSINESS CIRCLE.

2. Objectives

2.1. The club has been formed so that members meet once a week for breakfast to pursue business matters of mutual interest. More particularly, this is to build business, build community and build relationships in and around Worthing. It is based on the belief that the foundation of good business is good relationships, and strong local business can be good for the community.

3. Size of Membership

3.1. The total membership may not exceed 50.

4. Limited Area

4.1. Only those living or working within Sussex, with an emphasis on strong connections with Worthing may be members.

5. Subscriptions and Cancellation

5.1. The monthly subscription is currently £70 per month payable monthly in advance on the first day of the month by GoCardless direct debit to the nominated Worthing Business Circle bank account.

5.2. This incorporates the membership fee and charge for breakfast and is due irrespective of whether the member attends the meetings.

5.3. The committee may cancel the membership of any member if the appropriate Direct Debit is not established or if it is cancelled.

5.4. No refund of membership will be paid if the member cancels their membership part way through a month.

5.5. The membership fee will remain payable for each month until advance written notice to cancel has been received by the committee from the member wishing to cancel. Members wishing to leave must give one month's notice before the first of the month. If a member gives notice halfway through the month, they will be liable to pay the subscription until the last day of the following month.

5.6. The treasurer reserves the right to announce an amendment to the monthly subscription price at the AGM each year based on the results for the previous year and on the basis of budgeted income and expenditure.

6. Formal Action on Non-Paying Members

6.1. In the event of default of membership fees by a member the Committee shall, at its discretion, instruct the group's legal member to seek to recover any debt.

7. Committee

7.1. The committee must consist of not more than 7 members from which number a chairperson, a treasurer and a secretary who are to be the officers of the club must be chosen.

7.2. The Committee must elect and may remove these officers.

7.3. The committee may co-opt not more than 2 additional members, but their places may not be included amongst those to be filled at any election of committee members.

8. First and Current Committee

8.1. The members of the first committee in January 2009 were Simon Lovering, David Stevens, Joe Sacco, Debbie Talmage, Dan Clark, and Ian Macara. 8.2. The current members of the serving committee are Kelly O'Haire (Chairperson), Debbie Russell (Secretary), Harry Donaldson (Treasurer), David Morrell, Nate Delmar-Addy, Angela Rabone and Connor Bassett.

9. Powers of the Committee

9.1. The committee is responsible for the running of the club and can make changes to any rules or operate any discretion it feels is needed to ensure that the club runs smoothly. A committee meeting has a quorum if 50% or more of the committee are present and decisions are passed by a majority vote.

9.2. The committee is empowered to make decisions on behalf of the club on any matters that are not directly dealt with in this constitution.

9.3. The committee’s interpretation of this constitution, and any decisions made by the committee regarding the day-to-day operations, membership approvals, category disputes, or disciplinary actions of the club, shall be final, binding, and conclusive on all members.

9.4. The committee recognises that members may occasionally face exceptional circumstances. The committee retains the absolute discretion to review individual member requests on a case-by-case basis and may, by majority vote, grant temporary dispensations or variations to the rules of this constitution where it deems it fair, reasonable, and in the best interest of the club.

10. Categories

10.1. The committee has a duty to ensure that all the members are focused on one core business (as per the members' application form).

10.2. If a member is starting a new complimentary business to their original application, provided there is no conflict within the club, that member may announce any such new venture to the members on one occasion only.

10.3. If a member wishes to change their category, a new application must be submitted to the committee for consideration.

10.4. No member can apply to fill more than one category.

10.5. The secretary will keep a file of completed application forms noting the business categories for each member electronically.

10.6. A business owner may only have one business that they own represented within the club at any given time. This restriction applies regardless of whether a manager or alternative representative is proposed to represent a second business. Furthermore, no individual member or attendee may represent, pitch, or promote more than one business or business category during any club meeting or event.

11. Prospective Members and Guests

11.1. Any member may invite a guest to the club's breakfast provided they have followed the following procedure.

11.2. Firstly, they notify the chairperson in advance with details of the guest's name, business and email address, stating whether they are interested in joining WBC or wishing to publicise a charity or special event. If wishing to join the group the following procedure will be followed:-

11.3. The chairperson will circulate the details to the rest of the committee to check that there is no obvious clash of category or conflict with an existing member. Should there be any possible conflict with a present member's category, one of the committee members will speak with the relevant member to ascertain if they are happy for the guest to attend with the possibility of becoming a member.

11.4. The chairperson will invite the prospective member by email, including details of venue, breakfast arrangements, breakfast charge, outline of the meeting and offering a choice of dates.

11.4.1. The first meeting will be free and the second meeting the cost will cover the present cost of breakfast.

11.5. The prospective member will be introduced to the rest of the membership over two breakfasts; if any member has an objection to the guest becoming a full member, they should inform the committee immediately.

11.6. If there have not been any objections after two breakfasts, the secretary will invite the prospective member to complete an application form to join.

11.6.1. The guest must decide whether to complete the formal application. If they do so, they will state their business category.

11.7. The completed application form will be forwarded to the whole committee for formal approval; the treasurer will enable a GoCardless direct debit to be actioned; and the committee member responsible for updating the website will add the member's details.

11.8. Finally, at the next breakfast meeting the new member will be formally welcomed to the group.

11.9. Guests, who are not wishing to join the group, are subject to the discretion of the committee. For example, charities may occasionally attend to publicise a particular event or project.

11.9.1. Members should contact one of the committee members to suggest that the guest is invited.

11.9.2. The request will be circulated to the rest of the committee.

12. Members Expenses

12.1. Each member must pay their own expenses.

13. Other Activities

13.1. The Club may organise and or engage in other activities not inconsistent with a business breakfast club.

13.2. If a member has confirmed they will attend another activity or event organised by the committee on behalf of the club, the committee reserves the right to charge the member for any costs incurred as a result of the subsequent non-attendance.

14. Bank Account

14.1. A bank account must be opened in the name of the club.

15. Annual and General Meetings

15.1. The annual meeting of the club must be held no later than 25th February in each year.

15.2. The meeting must be convened by notice in writing either:

15.2.1. Posted or emailed by the secretary or other person on behalf of the committee to each member at their address in the register of members at least 7 days before the date of the meeting or

15.2.2. Displayed prominently at the club's usual place of meeting during at least one of its usual meetings held at least 7 days before the meeting and read out during the meeting.

15.3. The secretary must, on a written request from at least 10 members, convene a general meeting within 28 days to consider the matters raised in the request.

15.4. A general meeting must be convened in the same manner as the annual meeting.

16. Conduct of Annual and General Meetings

16.1. At any annual or general meeting:

16.1.1. The club chairperson must chair the meeting and (except as otherwise provided for) in the event of any vote the manner of the vote and its declaration are the chairperson's sole responsibility

16.1.2. The chairperson and the treasurer must present brief reports and

16.1.3. Any member may raise any matter, subject at all times to the decision of the chairperson.

17. Retirement of Committee Members

17.1. At each annual meeting all co-opted members of the committee and elected members of the committee must retire.

17.2. Retiring members are eligible for re-election.

18. Nominations for Committee

18.1. Nominations for the committee must be in writing and reach the secretary not less than 7 days before the annual meeting.

18.2. Each nomination must be made by at least 2 members and the member nominated must have agreed to stand.

18.3. The secretary must prepare voting papers to be distributed at the meeting.

18.4. The papers must state the number of vacancies to be filled, the names of the retiring members of the committee who wish to offer themselves for re-election and the names of the persons nominated to stand for election to the committee.

18.5. Each member must vote by making a mark against the names of those persons they wish to fill the vacancies, folding the voting paper and handing it in.

18.6. Any member handing in more than one voting paper must produce for each additional paper the written authority to vote on behalf of a member not present at the meeting.

18.7. The votes for each name must be counted, and the vacancies must be filled by those with the most votes.

18.8. In the event of a tie, the decision must be made by lot. In the event of a tie, a 2nd ballot will be held including only the tied names. In the event of a 2nd tie, the decision must be made by lot drawn by the chairperson.

18.9. If there are no nominations, then the retiring members (excluding co-opted members) who have offered themselves for re-election must be declared re-elected by a show of hands.

18.10. Should there be seven or less nominations for the committee then the vote can be carried out via show of hands from the attendees of the meeting.

18.11. The committee may fill any vacancies as they arise throughout the year. The committee will do this by requesting applications from the current members and voting upon their appointment with one vote per committee member.

19. Expulsion of Members

19.1. If at any annual meeting two-thirds or more of the members present decide that a member is not attending at least 50% of the club's events over a 12-month period, their membership may be cancelled by the meeting.

19.2. The committee may, by unanimous resolution, exclude from the membership any member who does not attend a minimum of 4 consecutive meetings.

19.3. The committee may terminate membership of an existing member if the particular member is deemed to not be adhering to the professional standards of conduct which could bring the reputation of Worthing Business Circle and its members into disrepute.

20. Surplus Funds

20.1. If at any annual meeting the club has surplus funds in hand, after retaining the excess of the Group's Insurance, and £2,000.00 as a contingency fund, the members present may by a simple majority decide to donate some or all of them to a nominated charity or charities or carry forward against budgeted expenditure for the club for the following year.

21. Disposal of Funds on Dissolution

21.1. If the club is dissolved or discontinued, the balance in the bank after payment of all expenses must be given to a charity or charities nominated by the last committee.

22. Alteration of the Constitution

22.1. No alteration of or addition to this constitution may be made except by a resolution carried by a majority of at least two-thirds of the members who are present at a general meeting, the notice of which contained particulars of the proposed alterations or additions.