

Sussex Community Search Team

Constitution adopted on 16th March 2015

1. Definitions

The organisation shall be known as the **Sussex Community Search Team**, or alternatively the **Community Search Team – Sussex**, hereinafter called the Team.

Executive Officers shall mean such Team members as shall be elected at an Annual General Meeting to the following positions. Two persons may share any such role if considered expedient.

1. Chair
2. Deputy Chair (if considered appropriate)
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer.

Executive Committee shall mean such Team members as shall be elected at an Annual General Meeting and will comprise the Executive Officers plus up to 8 (eight) members.

In addition, representatives nominated by Sussex Police shall be entitled to attend and speak at all meetings, but will not be eligible to vote or be deemed to be Executive Officers.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. The primary objective of the Team shall be to recruit, train and maintain a group of volunteer members who are prepared to search for missing and/or vulnerable persons or lost or abandoned property in urban and rural areas in Sussex or neighbouring Force areas, when requested to do so by Sussex Police.
- 2.2. Additionally, with the agreement of the Executive Committee, the Team may volunteer to assist the Police and other Authorities in other circumstances and in other locations.
- 2.3. The Objectives shall be achieved in accordance with the Sussex Police Policy Document covering the use of volunteer Search Teams.

3. Aims and Powers

The Team shall be a not for profit organisation, non-party in politics, non-sectarian in religion, operate an equal opportunities and non-discriminatory policy and will embrace diversity.

The Team shall do all lawful and prudent things necessary for the attainment of the Objectives. Members shall comply with all laws and statutory requirements, follow best effective practice principles, and Charity Commission guidance unless there are substantial and justifiable good reasons not to comply.

In furtherance of the said Objectives the Team may:

- 3.1. Raise funds, invite and receive donations from any persons or bodies by way of subscription or otherwise, provided that the Team shall not undertake any permanent trading activities to raise funds. The Team may accept gifts or raise money in such a legal manner as the Executive Committee shall think fit.
- 3.2. Invest monies not immediately required for its purposes in such investments as may be fit, subject to such conditions as may be imposed by the Executive Committee.
- 3.3. Arrange suitable Public and Products Liability insurance cover to protect its interests and those of its members. The Team may also arrange such other insurances as the Executive Officers may reasonably consider necessary to protect the interests of the Team and its Executive Officers.

4. Membership

- 4.1. Membership of the Team shall be open to any adult 18 years of age or over who meets and continues to meet relevant criteria, is resident in Sussex or neighbouring Police Force areas, and who supports the Aims and Objectives of the Team.
- 4.2. Members and prospective members are required to agree to conform to the rules set out in the Membership Application Form, undergo satisfactory police vetting checks, comply with the Code of Ethics and Standards, furnish additional information and complete and sign any documents which may reasonably be required from time to time.
- 4.3. Members are expected to demonstrate their commitment to the Team and maintenance of the appropriate skill standards by attending at least one live search or training exercise every 12 (twelve) months.
- 4.4. Members shall be entitled to vote at Annual General Meetings, Extraordinary and open Meetings of the Team.
- 4.5. Nominated Sussex Police officials shall be ex-officio non-voting members.

5. Termination of Membership

- 5.1. A member may resign by giving written notice to the Secretary or the nominated Sussex Police officials.
- 5.2. The Executive Committee shall have the right, for good and sufficient reason, or for any breach of the rules as set out in the Membership Application Form or Code of Ethics and Standards, to decline, discipline, suspend or terminate the membership of any individual, provided that the said individual is afforded the opportunity of being heard by the Executive Committee before the final decision is made.
- 5.3. The agreement by a simple majority of the Executive Officers shall be necessary to decline, discipline, suspend or terminate any membership.

6. Executive Committee

- 6.1. The management of the Team shall be undertaken by the Executive Committee with powers conducive and incidental to attaining the Objectives and the management of the Team.
- 6.2. The Executive Committee shall agree functional responsibilities for its Committee members, who will oversee and be responsible for their agreed functions. Such Committee members may delegate authority to other Team members to implement appropriate activities within their function to achieve the desired results, subject to such limitations as may be agreed. The Committee members shall ensure that such activities are properly monitored and controlled, and they shall report back to the Executive Committee periodically or as necessary.
- 6.3. The Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt further members onto the Committee and/or appoint sub-committees as and when deemed necessary. The Executive Committee shall determine the terms of reference, power, duration and composition of any sub-committees. All acts and proceedings of such sub-committees shall be reported back to the Executive Committee fully and promptly.
- 6.4. Executive Officers and Executive Committee and any co-opted members shall retire at the conclusion of each Annual General Meeting but shall be eligible for re-election.
- 6.5. Executive Officers shall be entitled to an indemnity out of the assets of the Team for all reasonable expenses and other liabilities properly and necessarily incurred by them in the management of the affairs of the Team, but this indemnity shall not extend to liabilities arising from any illegal act, wrongdoing or wrongful omission on the part of the member sought to be made liable.

7. Nomination of Executive Officers and Committee

- 7.1. Nominations for the Executive Officers and Executive Committee, duly proposed and seconded, shall be delivered to the Secretary at least 7 (seven) days before the Annual General Meeting, with the written consent of each nominee. Written nominations shall not be required for re-elections. If there are insufficient nominations to fill vacant places, then at the Chair's discretion nominations may also be invited from the floor at any Annual General Meeting.
- 7.2. The Annual General Meeting of the Team shall elect the Executive Officers and Executive Committee, and appoint the Auditor or Independent Examiner as shall be appropriate. If the Meeting fails to elect the said persons then the Executive Committee may make such appointments. Efforts shall be made to ensure that at least one Executive Committee member resident in each Police Division in Sussex be elected.
- 7.3. Nominations for the role of Auditor and/or Independent Examiner shall exclude Executive Officers and Executive Committee members, and bar the elected Auditor or Independent Examiner from serving as an Executive Officer or Executive Committee member for a period of 12 (twelve) months after the end of their term of office as Auditor or Independent Examiner.

8. Meetings

- 8.1. The Executive Committee shall meet at least 4 (four) times each year.
- 8.2. Representatives nominated by Sussex Police shall not be permitted to vote on any issue, but they shall have the right to challenge any proposal or activities of the Executive Committee which Sussex Police feels unable to support.
- 8.3. Notice of meetings given electronically shall be deemed to be notice in writing.
- 8.4. The Annual General Meeting of the Team shall normally be held in April or May. At least 28 (twenty-eight) clear days notice in writing shall be sent to members. Failure to receive such notice will not invalidate the proceedings.
- 8.5. At the Annual General Meeting the business shall include:
 - 8.5.1. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting
 - 8.5.2. Chair's Report
 - 8.5.3. Treasurer's Report
 - 8.5.4. Election of Executive Officers and Executive Committee
 - 8.5.5. Appointment of Auditor or Independent Examiner
 - 8.5.6. Any other business
 - 8.5.7. When necessary, consideration of and voting on proposals to alter this Constitution, which shall be in accordance with clause 11 hereof.

- 8.6. Members must notify the Secretary at least 14 (fourteen) days prior to the Annual General Meeting of any subject for inclusion on the agenda.
- 8.7. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be convened at the discretion of the Executive Committee, or by a written request made to the Secretary by at least 10 (ten) Team members or Sussex Police, stating the specific reason(s). The Secretary shall within a reasonable time convene a meeting, subject to 21 (twenty-one) days notice given in writing to all members.

9. **Conduct of Meetings**

- 9.1. Three (3) members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum of the Executive Committee.
- 9.2. Ten (10) members shall constitute a quorum for any Annual General Meeting or any Extraordinary General Meeting.
- 9.3. At Executive Committee meetings resolutions shall be proposed, seconded and decided by a simple majority of votes.
- 9.4. At Annual General Meetings, Extraordinary General Meetings and Open meetings voting shall be restricted to Team members. Resolutions shall be proposed and seconded, and ordinarily be passed by a majority of votes on a show of hands. However, a secret ballot may be held upon request of any Executive Committee member present. This shall be adjudicated by an independent ex officio person, and the outcome recorded in the Minutes of that meeting. Voting by proxy is not permitted.
- 9.1. The Chair of a meeting, when entitled to a vote, shall in the event of a tie also have a second or casting vote at that meeting.
- 9.2. Should, for whatever reason, a member of the Executive Committee hold office in more than one position, to maintain the integrity of the Executive Committee he/she will only be entitled to cast a single vote in the event of any voting situation that may occur.
- 9.3. Minutes shall be kept by the Executive Committee, and the Secretary shall enter therein a record of all proceedings and resolutions. In the absence of a permanent Secretary a Minute Secretary may be appointed for the purpose of this Clause. Any such appointment will be ex-officio unless undertaken by a standing member of the Executive Committee.

10. Finance

- 10.1. The financial year shall end on the 31st March.
- 10.2. All monies raised by or on behalf of the Team shall be applied to further the purposes of the Team and not otherwise. Nothing herein contained shall prevent the reimbursement in good faith of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses necessarily and properly incurred in furtherance of the Objectives.
- 10.3. The Treasurer shall keep proper and accurate Accounts of the finances of the Team. The Treasurer will report to each meeting of the Executive Officers, at each Annual General Meeting, and whenever requested by a member of the Executive Committee, a true and fair view of the financial situation of the Team.
- 10.4. The Accounts will be audited, certified or examined annually by the appointed Auditor or Independent Examiner, and such audited Accounts presented at the Annual General Meeting. The Treasurer will produce for inspection at any reasonable time the bank books, cash books and other financial documentation and information concerning the Team.
- 10.5. Bank Accounts shall be maintained in the name of the Team with such bank as the Executive Officers shall from time to time decide. The Executive Officers shall authorise in writing nominated Executive Committee members, one always being the Treasurer, who shall from time to time determine to make payments or sign cheques on behalf of the Team. All payment authorisations and cheques must be signed by two of the authorised signatories.

11. Alterations to the Constitution

- 11.1. Any proposed alterations to this Constitution shall require the assent of not less than 75% (seventy-five percent) majority of votes of those present and voting at an Annual General Meeting. Notice of any such alteration must have been received by the Secretary in writing not less than 21 (twenty-one) clear days before the Meeting at which the alterations are to be proposed. At least 14 (fourteen) clear days' notice in writing of such a Meeting, setting out the terms of the proposed alterations, must be sent by the Secretary to every Team member.
- 11.2. In circumstances where minor changes to the Constitution are deemed necessary to ensure the continued accuracy of content, such changes may be made following a simple majority vote of approval by the Executive Committee. These changes (including such items as change of name, change of Committee numbers and/or responsibilities, frequency of meetings, etc.) that are considered necessary by circumstances prevailing at the time, may be made, provided that such changes in no way alter the fundamental Objectives, Aims and Powers as detailed in clauses 2 and 3 or alter the provisions relating to the Dissolution of the Team as set out below.

12. Dissolution

- 12.1. If the Executive Committee decides, by a simple majority, it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Team, the Executive Officers shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting stating the terms of the Resolution to be proposed thereat. If such decisions shall be confirmed by a 75% (seventy-five percent) majority of votes of those present and voting at such meeting, the Executive Officers shall have the power to dispose of any assets held by or on behalf of the Team. Notice of any such Resolution must have been received by the Secretary in writing not less than 21 (twenty-one) clear days before the Meeting at which the Resolution is to be proposed. At least 14 (fourteen) clear days' notice in writing of such a Meeting, setting out the terms of the proposed Resolution, must be sent by the Secretary to every Team member.
- 12.2. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Team as the Executive Officers may decide, or may be applied for some other charitable purpose.