



Mulberry Tree

Steiner Early Years Group

THE MULBERRY TREE STEINER EARLY YEARS GROUP

Constitution

1. Name

- 1.1 The name of the organisation shall be The Mulberry Tree Steiner Early Years Group, also known as The Mulberry Tree, and is a body registered with the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.

2. Aim

- 2.1 The aim of the organisation is to enable the development and education of young children by encouraging parents to understand and provide for the needs of their children through Steiner Education by:
- (a) Holding educational/play sessions for: Parents/toddlers and young children, ensuring that such groups offer opportunities for all children, regardless of race, culture, religion, disability or means.
 - (b) Encouraging the study of the needs of such groups.
 - (c) Acting as a resource centre for news of local and national Steiner events and courses.

3. Powers

- 3.1 For the furtherance of this aim the organisation may
- (a) Provide accommodation and equipment and engage staff
 - (b) Raise money to pay for its activities
 - (c) Make such payments as shall be necessary
 - (d) Fix and collect the fees payable in respect of parents/guardians and children attending groups run by the organisation.

- (e) Control the admission of children to the groups run by the organisation and, if appropriate, require parents or guardians to withdraw them.
- (f) Send representatives to courses/meetings of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.
- (g) Take such action as may benefit the organisation.
- (h) Subject to any consents required by law, borrow money and charge all or any part of the property of the group with repayment of the money borrowed.

4. Membership

4.1 Membership shall be of three kinds:

- (a) Family Members - Parents or guardians of all children who attend any group run by the organisation, each family to have one vote and count as one ordinary member.
- (b) Other Members - Other interested individuals, persons of other bodies, approved by the Committee shall be entitled to become ordinary members of the organisation.
- (c) Paid Employees approved by the Committee shall be entitled to become ordinary members of the organisation.

5. General Meetings

- 5.1 An Annual General Meeting shall be held in the second half of the Spring term each year, or as soon as practicable thereafter, at which the Annual report and accounts prepared in accordance with current Charity Act legislation requirements shall be presented and agreed. The Organisation shall also comply with such legislation regarding the transmission of the statements of account of the Organisation to the Charity Commission.
- 5.2 A Special General Meeting may be called at any time at the request of the committee or not less than one quarter of the members (for the avoidance of doubt for this purpose each family counts as one member).
- 5.3 The Secretary or Chair shall send a note of the date, time and place of each Annual General Meeting and any Special General Meeting, with a list of items to be discussed, to all members at least two weeks before the date of the meeting.

- 5.4 If the chair or Secretary does not call a Special General Meeting, within two months of a proper request to do so, any member may call that meeting by putting up a notice in a conspicuous place where the group meets at least two weeks before the meeting.
- 5.5 The quorum for a General Meeting shall be 20% of the ordinary members or 5 ordinary members whichever is the greater. If fewer attend, a new meeting must be called. (for the avoidance of doubt for this purpose each family counts as one ordinary member).

6. Committee

- 6.1 The committee shall meet at least three times a year and is responsible for ensuring that the organisation complies with its aims and is properly managed.
- 6.2 The committee shall consist of:
- (a) 3 officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer).
 - (b) Not less than 2 nor more than 9 elected members, and
 - (c) If the committee so decides, not more than 5 member co-opted by the Committee. Not more than 40% of committee membership will be co-opted members at any one time. If more are required then a Special General Meeting will be held to vote on new members.
- 6.3 At least 33% of the Committee members, including co-opted Members shall be at the time of election or co-option, be parents or guardians of children in groups run by the Organisation. Employed staff members will not exceed 33% of the committee at any one time.
- 6.4 The officers and committee members in 6.2(a) and 6.2(b) shall be elected for one year at the Annual General Meeting. Retiring Officers and Committee members are eligible for re-election.
- 6.5 Co-opted members in 6.2(c) may join at any time, at the invitation of the Committee, but shall retire at the next AGM. No co-opted member shall serve for more than six consecutive years.
- 6.6 In the event of the death or resignation of an elected Member the vacancy shall be filled until the next Annual General Meeting by a member appointed by the Committee.

- 6.7 The Committee may pass a Resolution to remove a Committee Member if that Member has been absent without the permission of the Committee from all their meetings over a period of six months.
- 6.8 Officers, elected members and co-opted members each have one vote. In the event of a tie the Chair has a casting vote. A quorum shall be not less than half the committee, including 2 of the Officers.
- 6.9 Paid employees are employed by the committee and therefore cannot be committee members or vote at Committee Meetings unless co-opted by prior approval of the Committee under Clause 4(b) or voted in at a General Meeting. Employed staff may not vote on their own terms and conditions of work and will abstain on these matters. Any paid employee can be invited to attend any or all meetings in an advisory capacity and should normally be so invited if appropriate to their position or the agenda. Paid employees, if Family members of the Group in accordance with clause 4(a), shall be entitled to attend and vote at all General Meetings of the group.

7. Holding Trustees

- 7.1 The title to any real and/or leasehold property or land, which may be acquired by the group, shall be vested in the official Custodian for Charities. The official Custodian is a member of the Charity Commission's staff who is appointed by the Commissioners to hold land on behalf of charities. All powers, duties and responsibilities for managing the said property or land remain that of the Committee.

8. Finance

- 8.1 The committee shall ensure that proper accounting records of the organisation are kept. The accounting records shall contain:
- (a) Entries showing from day to day all monies received and expended and the matters in respect of which the receipt and expenditure took place.
 - (b) A record of the assets (Money, goods and property) held and any monies owed by the organisation.

- 8.2 At each meeting of the committee the Treasurer shall present an up to date written statement of receipts and payments to the committee, acceptance of which shall be recorded in the minutes.
- 8.3 Any two Officers shall sign all cheques.
- 8.4 The financial year will end on the 31st August of each year. At the end of the financial year the Treasurer shall prepare a receipts and payment account and a statement of assets and liabilities, which have been examined by an independent examiner (or, when necessary to comply with current legislations, accruals accounts examined by an independent examiner or registered auditor) for the preceding year. These shall be presented to the Annual General Meeting.
- (a) An independent examiner is a person independent of the organisation who is reasonably believed by the committee to have the requisite ability and practical experience to carry out a competent examination of the accounts.
- 8.5 The funds of the organisation shall be used only for the purposes of the organisation and no payment shall be made to ordinary members (i.e. not being a Committee Member) except:
- (a) If that ordinary member is employed by the organisation and then only as proper remuneration in respect of that employment.
- (b) As repayment of expenses properly incurred on behalf of the organisation.
- (c) As interest at a reasonable rate on money lent to the organisation

9. Dissolution

- 9.1 If at a general meeting of the organisation, a two-thirds majority of members present and voting decide to terminate the existence of the organisation, any funds or equipment remaining after all debts have been paid shall be handed to a similar Waldorf Steiner new initiative in the region or to some other charitable institution having similar aims to this organisation. The Committee shall have the power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the organisation. If there is no Annual General Meeting for two successive years, and if no Member of the Committee makes the necessary arrangements, any other Ordinary member may do so. A copy of the statement of accounts, or account and statement, for the final accounting period of the Charity must be sent to the Commission.

10. Change of Constitution

- 10.1 This constitution may be altered only if two thirds or more of the members present and voting at a General Meeting vote in favour of changing it. The notice of the general meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.
- 10.2 No amendment may be made to clauses 1, 2, 8.4, 9 or 10 without the prior consent in writing of the commissioners. No amendment may be made which would have the effect of making the group cease to be a charity at law. The committee should promptly send to the Commission a copy of any amendment made under this clause.

This constitution was amended and approved by the Members of the Mulberry Tree Steiner Early Years Group at a Special General Meeting on 17th June 2011 at Mead Court, Stone.

Chair: **Sian Whelan**

5 Mead Court, Stone

Secretary: **Andrew Gray**

31 Sandpits Lane, Hawkesbury Upton

Treasurer: Post not filled