

Sustainable Devizes

A community in transition

CONSTITUTION

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1. Name

The name of the group is Sustainable Devizes.

2. Area

Sustainable Devizes covers Devizes town and the surrounding parishes, broadly defined by, but not confined to, the Wiltshire Council definition of the Devizes Community Area. (See map in Appendix A).

3. Aims

We recognise that human activity is the primary cause of climate change, principally by the burning of fossil fuels. The continued rate of fossil fuel extraction is not sustainable since fossil fuels are a finite resource.

We aim to:

- Raise awareness about the challenge posed by climate change and peak oil, and the impact it may have on our way of life in the Devizes area
- Encourage the community to take effective action to reduce its carbon footprint and reliance on fossil fuels
- Work with the local community to find ways of adapting to these changes to become more resilient
- Become a Transition Town by joining the Transition Network
- Abide by the principles set out by the Transition Network (See Appendix B)

4. Objectives

- 4.1** Support, encourage and facilitate local community action on climate change, and work with local authorities, businesses and other groups.
- 4.2** Develop a vision of what the local area could look like in the future.
- 4.3** Show how a community could thrive and be happy whilst using less fossil fuel.
- 4.4** Create and implement an Energy Descent Action Plan that reduces our dependence on fossil fuels (see Appendix B).
- 4.5** Create and support projects that reduce the local carbon footprint.
- 4.6** Foster community resilience by promoting a more locally based economy.
- 4.7** Support approaches to help protect the area from the effects of extreme weather events.

5. Powers

In order to achieve these aims and objectives, Sustainable Devizes may:

- Form a Core Group/Management Committee, theme groups and working parties
- Open and manage a bank account
- Create an annual subscription for membership
- Engage in, support and promote education and research
- Raise funds, apply for grants, and seek contributions from other sources
- Organise events and activities
- Take out Insurance
- Publish and distribute information
- Host a website, manage social networks and other media to support our aims and objectives
- Recruit volunteers, employ staff and enter into contracts as appropriate
- Undertake any trade, business, enterprise, project or venture which could aid delivery of the aims and objectives

6. Ways of Working

- 6.1** All views are equally valid, and we will work together in a collaborative manner.
- 6.2** All decisions will be made by consensus. If a situation arises where those not in agreement wish to maintain an objection, the matter will be adjourned to the next meeting. If consensus is still not achieved, the matter will be decided by a majority of two-thirds.
- 6.3** Sustainable Devizes is a non-hierarchical group.

- 6.4 Sustainable Devizes is transparent in everything that it undertakes.
- 6.5 Sustainable Devizes is an inclusive organisation.
- 6.6 Sustainable Devizes fully supports the UN Declaration of Human Rights (General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948).
- 6.7 Members will be mindful of the public reputation of Sustainable Devizes.
- 6.8 Sustainable Devizes accepts that things can sometimes go wrong, and when they do, we learn from the mistakes, and move on in a positive way.

7. Membership

- 7.1 Membership is open to anyone who lives or works in the Sustainable Devizes area who supports our aims and agrees to abide by this Constitution.
- 7.2 Members shall be admitted without reference to wealth, politics, gender, disability, faith, ethnicity, sexual orientation or age.
- 7.3 A subscription for membership and fees may be levied if agreed by members at a General Meeting.
- 7.4 Every member shall have one vote at General Meetings.
- 7.5 The Management Committee shall have the power to refuse an applicant where it is considered such membership would be detrimental to the aims and objectives of Sustainable Devizes.
- 7.6 If a member or appointed representative of a member organisation or sub-group wishes to resign, they are requested to do so in writing to the Management Committee.
- 7.7 The Management Committee may, by resolution passed at a meeting, terminate or suspend the membership of any member or member organisation, if their conduct is considered to prejudice the aims and objectives of Sustainable Devizes. The individual member or member organisation representative shall have the right to appeal to the Management Committee, or if necessary, an independent arbitrator appointed by mutual agreement.

8. Management Committee

- 8.1 In accordance with the Transition Network's criteria, Sustainable Devizes shall be administered by a Core Group initially. After the first General Meeting, the Core Group will consist of elected officers.
- 8.2 Over time, a Management Committee will ultimately supercede the Core Group as Theme Groups are created and representatives from these create the Management Committee alongside elected officers.

- 8.3** The Management Committee shall be a minimum of 4 and maximum of 10 persons.
- 8.4** A Management meeting is quorate where there are 4 members of the Committee, 2 of whom must be officers. All Management Committee officers are required for the first two committee meetings.
- 8.5** All decisions at committee meetings shall be made by consensus.
- 8.6** The Management Committee shall meet at least quarterly.

9. Officers

- 9.1** The Core Group (and Management Committee, post initiation stage) shall consist of:
- Chairperson
 - Treasurer
 - Meetings secretary
 - Membership secretary
 - Web Manager
 - And any other officers deemed necessary by the Management Committee or AGM or General Meeting.
- 9.2** These officers shall be nominated by members and elected or re-elected at Annual General Meetings (AGMs).
- 9.3** An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) can be held to elect officers.
- 9.4** Duties of post holders are described in Appendix C.

10. General Meetings

- 10.1** General Meetings mean either Annual General Meetings or Extraordinary General Meetings (EGMs).
- 10.2** The running of Sustainable Devizes is subject to review and all members are encouraged to participate.
- 10.3** This constitution shall be ratified unanimously by the Core Group for acceptance by a General Meeting.
- 10.4** Following the initial General Meeting, each subsequent AGM shall be at a maximum 15 month interval.
- 10.5** At least 21 days notice shall be given for each AGM or EGM.
- 10.6** The business of the AGM shall include:
- An annual activity report by the chairperson
 - An accounts report by the treasurer

- The appointment of an independent examiner of accounts
 - Election of officers listed in 9.1 above, and any other officer agreed by the meeting. Post holder duties are described in Appendix C
 - Consideration of any other matter material to the organisation including amendments to this Constitution
- 10.7** Each subscribed member shall have one vote at General Meetings. Non-members are welcome to attend but may not vote.
- 10.8** A General Meeting shall be quorate if 5 members are present, of which at least 3 shall be officers. The chairing of General Meetings may be shared between Management Committee members.
- 10.9** All decisions at General Meetings shall be made by consensus following the fullest discussion in which all members are entitled to speak freely.
- 10.10** General Meetings may propose new committees, sub-committees, theme groups, working groups and research groups, which should operate within the parameters set by the General Meeting.
- 10.11** General Meetings may also choose to appoint members to operate within parameters set by the General Meeting.

11. Finance

- 11.1** Sustainable Devizes shall not trade for profit. All monies received by or on its behalf shall be to further the aims of Sustainable Devizes and for no other purpose.
- 11.2** All monies shall be held in a bank account chosen for the ethical standards of the bank.
- 11.3** The treasurer shall keep accounts of all monies debited and credited to the account, and shall present a treasurer's report to AGMs and on request by the Management Committee meetings and EGMs.
- 11.4** Three members of the Management Committee shall be appointed as signatories to the account, to include the treasurer and the chairperson.
- 11.5** The three signatories shall have access to the online accounts.
- 11.6** Prior to any monies leaving the account, the treasurer shall obtain written (email or otherwise) authority from at least one of the other signatories.
- 11.7** A minimum of two signatories are required for any transaction.
- 11.8** Any proposal to spend over £50 must be approved in writing by the Management Committee.
- 11.9** Any requests for payments must be supported by appropriate receipts.

11.10 Sustainable Devizes can borrow, but the lender cannot influence decisions. Interest should not be more than 2% above the base lending rate.

11.11 The records, including accounts, shall be open to the inspection of all members at reasonable hours and by other persons authorised by the Management Committee.

12. Records:

Sustainable Devizes shall keep:

- Records of dates of General Meetings
- Minutes of decisions made at all meetings
- The sum and nature of all expenditure and income
- A record of current members shall be kept in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (or later amendments)

13. Amendments to the Constitution

Changes to this constitution may be made at an AGM or EGM where all members have been given 21 clear days prior notice of the change proposed and the date, time and location of the meeting.

14. Dissolution

14.1 Sustainable Devizes may be wound up at any time if agreed by a consensus of Sustainable Devizes Members present at either an AGM or an EGM, or by written vote.

14.2 In the event of winding up or dissolution of Sustainable Devizes, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, the assets remaining shall be given or transferred to some other not-for-profit organisation chosen by the members and having similar aims to that of Sustainable Devizes.

15. Adoption of this constitution

This constitution was adopted by the members present at a General Meeting of the Core Group held on 2 November 2015.

Signed:

..... Chairperson

..... Membership Secretary

..... Meetings Secretary

..... Treasurer

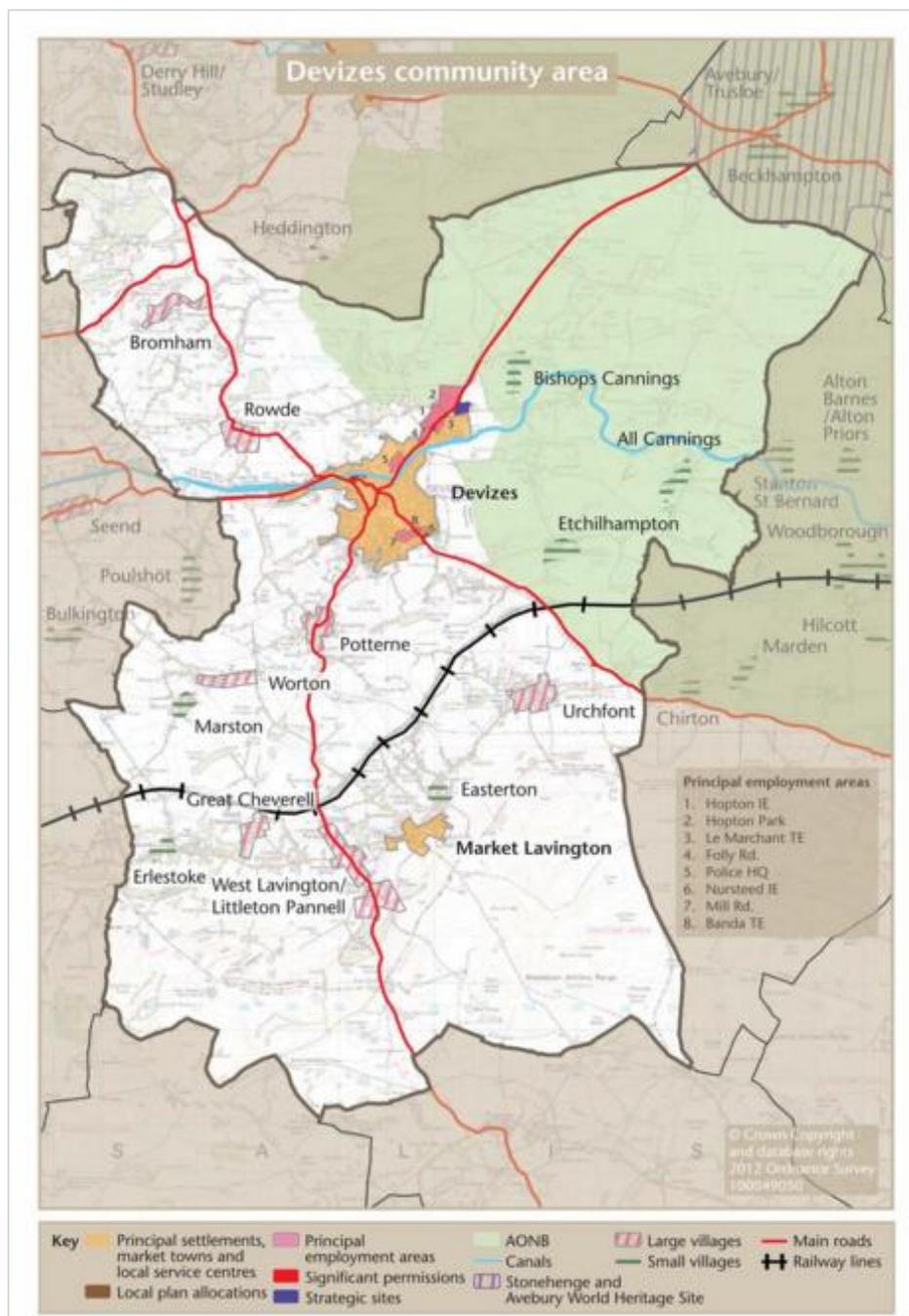
..... Member

..... Member

..... Member

APPENDIX A

Map of Devizes Community Area (see Section 2 above)



Map available online here:

http://consult.wiltshire.gov.uk/portal/spatial_planning/wcs/pre-subconsult2012?pointId=1329404303862

APPENDIX B

Definition of Terms

- **Climate change** refers to any long term and large scale shift attributed directly or indirectly to human activities which alter the composition of the global climate. The principle cause is the burning of fossil fuels with subsequent emissions of greenhouse gases such as CO₂.
- **Peak oil** refers to all fossil fuels, including oil, being a natural resource which is therefore limited and where the amount of extractable fuel will in due course 'peak' (estimates vary but could be in just a few years)
- An **Energy Descent Action Plan** is a local initiative for planning and preparing for energy reduction. Energy descent refers to a retraction of oil after Peak Oil availability. The process has been developed by the Transition Town Movement. An Energy Descent Action Plan is a way to think ahead, to plan in an integrated, multidisciplinary way, to provide direction to local government, decision makers, groups and individuals. It is a tool to aid communities with an interest in making the place they live into a vibrant and viable community in the post carbon era.
- A **Transition Town**, or more generally a transition initiative, is a grassroots community project that seeks to build resilience in response to peak oil, climate destruction, and economic instability by creating local groups that uphold the values of the transition network.
- The **Transition Network** is an organisation supporting community led responses to climate change and shrinking supplies of cheap energy, building resilience and happiness.
- **Resilience** is the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change, so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity and feedbacks.

Appendix C

Duties of Management Committee Officers

Chairperson to compile the agenda for Management Committee meetings, chair Management Committee and General Meetings, ensure that meeting minutes are taken and uploaded onto the Sustainable Devizes website, help motivate Theme Groups, promote Sustainable Devizes locally and nationally. To be one of the signatories for Sustainable Devizes financial activities, cheques, etc.

Meetings Secretary to advertise the dates of the meetings, take minutes at meetings, keep files of past minutes and reports, publicising meeting dates, location and subject matter, preparing agendas with the help of the Chairperson.

Membership Secretary to keep members informed of what correspondence has been sent out and received, to keep a record of membership, and a record of all matters pertaining to membership. Holding a central contact database of all agencies and people involved with Sustainable Devizes. To manage correspondence to and from Sustainable Devizes.

Treasurer to maintain and report management accounts for all of Sustainable Devizes' activities; aggregate individual Theme Group budgets into an overall Sustainable Devizes budget and to manage all approved payments associated with Management Committee and Theme Group projects.

Web Manager to ensure the smooth running and timely updating of the website, and provide appropriate web site usage advice, guidance to other Management Committee and Theme Group members. Keeping all meetings, records and events up to date on the website.