

CONSTITUTION OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE ME SUPPORT GROUP

Throughout this Constitution;

"ME" refers to "Myalgic Encephalomyelitis"

"CFS" refers to "Chronic Fatigue Syndrome"

"PVFS" refers to "Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome"

"FMS" refers to "Fibromyalgia Syndrome"

1) NAME

The name of the Group is the Worcestershire ME Support Group referred to throughout this Constitution as "the Group".

2) OBJECTS

- a) To support people suffering from, and affected by, ME, CFS, PVFS and FMS , through personal contact, meetings and information exchange;
- b) To raise public awareness, and promote a wider understanding, of ME, CFS, PVFS and FMS.

3) POWERS

- a) In furtherance of its Objects in Clause 2 above, but not otherwise, the Group may -
 - i) Provide services and publicise its activities;
 - ii) Raise funds through membership subscriptions, grants and donations;
 - iii) Purchase, rent, lease or hire property and equipment;
 - iv) Co-operate with other voluntary bodies, charities or statutory authorities;
 - v) Appoint voluntary or paid workers;
 - vi) These powers may be exercised on behalf of the Group by the Management Committee constituted under Clause 7.

4) GROUP MEMBERSHIP

- a) Membership of the Group shall be open to anyone with an interest in ME, CFS, PVFS and FMS whether or not that person resides in the County of Worcestershire;
- b) A person shall become a Group member from the date on which his or her written application is accepted, accompanied by the appropriate subscription. Where the membership subscription is reduced or waived because of a person's financial circumstances, that person shall become a Group member from the date on which his or her written application for membership is accepted;
- c) The Membership Year shall, from 2012, run from 1st October to 30th September and the annual subscription shall be payable in advance on 1st October each year;
- d) The Management Committee may terminate the membership of any person whose actions are deemed incompatible with any of the Group's published objects or aims;
- e) Before the Management Committee arrives at a decision about terminating a person's membership, he or she shall have the right to a personal hearing before the Committee, in which event the person concerned will be allowed to:
 - i) Attend the hearing with someone who may speak on his or her behalf; or
 - ii) May be represented at the hearing by someone he or she has nominated; or
 - iii) Make written representations that the Management Committee shall consider before arriving at a decision.
- f) The term "Group member(s)" throughout this Constitution refers to a person or persons who are defined as such in accordance with this Clause;

5) MEMBERSHIP RESOLUTION

- a) The Group's Annual General Meeting held in the year 2012 shall approve a Membership Resolution which will specify:
 - i) The membership subscription (with any variations for different categories of membership);

- ii) The waiver or reduction of a subscription (eg: for a person in financial difficulty or in respect of an application made part way through a Membership Year);
 - iii) Rules governing the circumstances in which a person's membership is deemed to have lapsed because of non-payment of the membership subscription.
- b) The Membership Resolution shall remain in force until amended or replaced by a further Resolution approved at a subsequent Annual General Meeting, or at an Extraordinary General Meeting, of the Group.

6) OFFICERS

- a) The Group Officers shall be the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer who shall, if possible, be elected at the Group's Annual General Meeting. Should any of these offices not be filled at the Annual General Meeting, or fall vacant, the Management Committee shall have the power to fill the office, or make replacement appointments, including the co-option of suitable persons to one, or more, of these posts;
- b) A Vice-Chair may also be elected at the Group's Annual General Meeting, in the absence of which, an appointment may be made by the Management Committee.

7) MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (referred to hereafter as "the Committee")

- a) The Group shall be administered by the Committee, consisting of the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, together with at least one other Group member;
- b) The Committee shall, subject to the proviso contained in Clause 6 (a) above, be elected at the Group's Annual General Meeting;
- c) The Committee shall meet on at least two occasions during each calendar year. Minutes of each meeting shall be kept;
- d) At least three Committee Members (provided they are Group members) attending a meeting shall be entitled to make decisions on behalf of the Group;
- e) The Committee may co-opt any Group member to the Committee, and that person shall have full voting rights at Committee meetings;

- f) The Committee may co-opt any non-member to the Committee (someone, for example, with special knowledge or skills that would benefit the Group) but that person shall not have any voting rights at Committee Meetings;
- g) Any person co-opted to the Committee may serve until the next Annual General Meeting of the Group, at which point his or her Committee membership shall cease. However, the new Committee elected at that Annual General Meeting may co-opt the person concerned to serve on the Committee for a further period;
- h) The Committee may invite any person, whether or not he or she is a Group member, to attend its meetings as an observer. The Chair may allow the observer to take part in discussions, but the observer shall not have any voting rights;
- i) The Committee may draw up rules setting out how its meetings are to be conducted and regulated;
- j) The Committee may invite any person it considers suitable to be Group President, a Group Patron, or an Honorary Member of the Group.

8) FINANCIAL MATTERS

- a) The Group shall operate a bank account in the Group's name into which all monies received by the Group from whatever source shall be paid;
- b) The Group's bank account shall be administered by the Treasurer, but it shall remain under the control of the Committee, who shall ensure that:
 - i) all cheques issued on the Group's behalf shall require two signatures; and
 - ii) only Committee members shall be authorised signatories;
- c) The Treasurer shall keep proper records of all receipts and payments, and shall report to Committee meetings on the Group's financial position, either verbally or in writing;
- d) The Group's accounts shall be independently checked and certificated by a suitably qualified person each year before they are presented for approval at the Group's Annual General Meeting;
- e) The Group's financial year shall run from 1st April to 31st March.

9) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- a) An Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Group shall be held not later than 30th September each year;
- b) At least twenty-one days notice of the AGM shall be given, in writing, to every Group member, together with the date, time and place of the meeting, and the business to be discussed. Any accidental failure to notify a Group member about the AGM shall not invalidate the proceedings;
- c) At least five Group members, of whom two are not Committee Members, shall be entitled to make decisions at an AGM;
- d) The business to be dealt with at the AGM shall include:
 - i) Electing Group Officers, as defined in Clause 6;
 - ii) Electing the Committee, as defined in Clause 7;
 - iii) Chair's report on Group activities since the previous AGM;
 - iv) Treasurer's report on the accounts for the previous financial year;
 - v) Adopting the Group's certificated accounts for the previous financial year;
 - vi) Approving a suitably qualified person to check and certify the Group's accounts;
 - vii) Minutes of an AGM shall be kept.
- e) Every Group member present at the AGM shall be entitled to one vote on any motion that is proposed and seconded. In the event of an equal number of votes being given in favour and against a motion, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

10) EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

- a) An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called by the Committee at any time, but must be arranged if at least one-third of Group members give notice in writing to the Secretary requesting an EGM;
- b) Should one-third or more Group members request an EGM, written notice (stating the date, time and place of the meeting) shall be given to all Group members within twenty-one days of their request, and the EGM shall be held within twenty-one days of that notice of meeting being sent to Group members;

- c) If the Committee decides to call an EGM, at least fourteen days notice of the EGM shall be given, in writing, to all Group members stating the date, time and place of the meeting, and the business to be discussed;
- d) Any accidental failure to notify a Group member about an EGM shall not invalidate the proceedings.

11) ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- a) This Constitution may only be amended at the Group's Annual General Meeting, or at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Group;
- b) Any alteration to this Constitution must receive the assent of at least two-thirds of Group members present at the meeting and voting.

12) DISSOLUTION

- a) If the Committee decides that it is necessary to dissolve the Group, the matter must be referred to the next Annual General Meeting or to an Extraordinary General Meeting, convened in accordance with Clause 10 above;
- b) In these circumstances, the notice of meeting sent to Group members shall include a resolution stating the terms on which the Committee proposes to dissolve the Group;
- c) A resolution to dissolve the Group must receive the assent of at least two-thirds of Group members present at the meeting and voting;
- d) If a decision is made to dissolve the Group, any money or assets held by the Group shall be donated to one or more charities working in the areas of ME, CFS or FMS.

This Constitution was approved and adopted by the assent of at least two-thirds of members of the Worcestershire ME Support Group who were present at the Annual General Meeting of the Group held on 27th September 2011.

SIGNED

Ian Logan, Chair, Worcestershire ME Support Group