

FNF THAMES VALLEY BRANCH - CONSTITUTION

1. Aims

- (a) To provide support and guidance for parents who are seeking to sustain or improve their relationship with their children during and after divorce or separation.
- (b) To seek support from local organisations and individuals for changes in public attitudes regarding the right of children to a continuing close relationship with both parents during and after divorce or separation.
- (c) To promote Families Need Fathers in the THAMES VALLEY area in line with the stated aims and objectives of FNF National Council.

2. The Committee

- (a) The affairs of the Branch shall be managed by a Committee of no fewer than three and no more than eight members who shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting.
- (b) The Officers of the Committee shall consist of a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and shall be elected by the Committee from amongst its numbers. A Committee member may hold concomitantly no more than one of these offices.
- (c) The Committee shall have the right to co-opt members to fill vacancies.
- (d) The Committee, at a committee meeting, may choose to deem any committee member who fails to attend two consecutive committee meetings without offering prior apology to one of the branch officers as having resigned from the Committee.
- (e) Any officer or member of the Committee who assumes office or takes part in the management of any other organisation related to family breakdown must inform the Committee as soon as practicable.

(f) No officer of the Branch may hold office in any other branch of the Society without permission of both the Thames Valley Branch and the National Council.

(g) The Committee shall meet at least once every quarter. The quorum for committee meetings shall be three.

(h) Minutes of every committee meeting must be taken, provided to each committee member and made available to other branch members if requested.

3. Meetings

(a) The Annual General Meeting shall be held no sooner than ten months and no later than fifteen months after the previous Annual General Meeting. A minimum of one calendar month's notice must be given. Notice may be given by way of the national newsletter, the Charity or Branch website, the members' email list or a combination of these.

(b) An Extraordinary General Meeting may be requested by any three members of the Committee or by any eight other eligible branch members or by the National Council by writing to the Branch Secretary. This meeting must then take place within one calendar month of the request being received (two calendar months if made during the summer holidays) .

(c) Note: an eligible member is a person who was approved as such by majority vote of the committee; and/or has attended at least four of the branch meetings over the previous six months; and/or is active and makes contributions via the Branch's mail list. Having done so is understood to be his/her expressed wish to be a member of the Branch.

(d) The quorum for all General Meetings shall aim to be six or more members, but no less than three.

(e) The Committee shall provide for regular publicised, public meetings to be held in order to address the aims expressed in 1(a) above.

(f) For the purpose of 3(a) (AGM) and 3(b) (EGM) above, a member may vote on an announced voting item by sending a postal vote to the branch secretary or by an email to the branch list, either of which to arrive 24 hours before the start of the meeting.

(g) Registers of each public meeting, covering the data required for completion of the latest Meeting Report Form, shall be taken. Meeting Report Forms for every public meeting shall be provided to the national office within a reasonable time of each meeting.

4. Requirements for National Council

(a) The Committee shall report to the National Council when required, subject to the Branch Constitution.

(b) The Branch shall not act contrary to the Society's (FNF) aims.

(d) Written communications with National Council shall be addressed to the FNF Secretary at the Society's National Office, unless responding to a specific enquiry from another officer.

(e) The Branch Treasurer shall present to the Branch Committee a written or verbal report at not more than six monthly intervals. The Committee may request an additional written or verbal report of him at any time.

(f) The Branch shall provide National Office with the names and contact details of those elected to the Branch Committee and advise of any subsequent changes within a reasonable time. The names and contact details of the Branch officers must be notified to the National Office within a week of their election or appointment.

(g) The Branch shall complete in full all the relevant details set out in the latest published version of the Branch Data Collection Sheet (BDC sheet) and send a copy to the National Office by the end of January each year.

(h) If requested, the Branch shall provide the National Office with a copy of the minutes of each Committee meeting when circulating minutes to

committee members.

(i) A member who is standing for election to the Committee and who is an undischarged bankrupt must declare this if elected and must not act as a signatory to Branch accounts.

(j) A member who has a criminal conviction for any offense involving a child must declare this when their name is put forward. This does not include allegations of offenses, pending or dismissed, in Family Court proceedings.

(k) Branches must provide the national office with copies of all published material simultaneously with any circulation outside of the Branch. Published material is understood to include printed pamphlets, brochures, adverts, etc., circulated outside the Branch with a view to increase public awareness of the Branch's aims and activities. However, all Branch's internal communications, printed or electronic, internal Branch email lists, etc., are excluded. National Council may notify individual branches that prior authority from National Council must be given before any publication. Thames Valley Branch may submit responses to Government consultations when invited to do so by a written invitation from National Council. Thames Valley Branch may initiate such responses but submit them subject to National Council approval.

(l) Branches must notify National Council of any plans to set up a branch website; shall notify it of the committee member with responsibility for the website; shall provide it with the contact details of the hosting company.

5. Financial Control

(a) The Branch Treasurer shall be responsible for all money collected on behalf of the Branch.

(b) The Branch shall not operate more than one account without written permission from the National Treasurer. The Branch account must have Families Need Fathers (in full, not just FNF) as part of the name of the account. Details of the account, including account number and signatories, must be notified to the National Office immediately an account is opened.

- (c) The Treasurer shall arrange to receive quarterly or more frequent statements of any bank account held by the branch.
- (d) The account shall be managed on a dual signatory basis. Only members of the Committee may be signatories.
- (e) The Branch must operate a credit balance at all times and shall not incur debt without the written permission of the National Treasurer.
- (f) The Branch Treasurer shall provide copies of any applications for grant funding to the National Treasurer prior to submitting such an application. He shall provide copy documents giving notice of successful applications and amounts to be received within 28 days of receiving such notice.
- (g) The Branch Treasurer shall provide accounts for the year ending March 31st each year and forward them to the National Treasurer to reach him by May 31st. A copy of the relevant bank statement(s) evidencing the sums declared in these accounts must be provided. National Council may require Branch accounts to be audited.

6. Branch Constitution

- (a) The Branch Constitution may be changed at a properly constituted General Meeting subject to a two thirds majority of those present and all members having received prior notice of any proposed amendment as in 3(b) above (Extraordinary General Meeting).
- (b) The Committee shall present the most up-to-date approved version of Branch Constitution and Financial Standing Orders for adoption by the branch at each AGM should it differ from the branch's existing management document.
- (c) Upon adoption of such a new Constitution, at least two officers shall sign a copy of the current branch Constitution and Financial Standing Orders and forward it for filing with the national office.

7. Dissolution

The Branch may be dissolved by a General Meeting of the Branch subject to the same rules as in 6(a) above. On dissolution, any assets of the Branch - none of which shall be divided between the remaining branch members - shall be distributed according to the wishes of the remaining branch members, with the view of donating them to charity.