



Birmingham Association of Neighbourhood Forums:

Membership and membership criteria

Association meetings

Complaints procedure

BANF Annual Registration Form

New Neighbourhood Forum Application Form



Membership and Membership Criteria

Criteria For Organisations' Membership/Affiliation of BANF

This policy develops the membership section of the constitution and is in keeping with it. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the 'Neighbourhood Forums Complaints Procedure'.

These are the normal guidelines and requirements relating to individual Neighbourhood Forums' membership of BANF. Variations relating to individual Forums can be made with the formal agreement of the Association. The membership policy should be continually reviewed in light of any variations.

All current BANF 'members' are automatically members if they wish to be and if they carry on meeting the following requirements of membership.

A. Area and size

- The organisation has a clear set geographical boundary
- The boundary is entirely in Birmingham
- The boundary does not cross the boundary of any other BANF member
- The boundary generally takes in no less than 500 households and no more than 5000 households.

B. Aims and objectives

- The aims of the organisation are based around representation and improvement of the area for the whole of the community, and these are the main aims, and this is reflected in the actual activity of the organisation.
- All members of the community living within the boundary have a fair and reasonable chance to stand for election to the management committee and vote for those standing.
- A policy relating to equal opportunities is in place and effective.

C. Membership and rights

- Anyone living within the boundary aged 16 or over shall be entitled to be a member of the Neighbourhood Forum.
- Youth membership and / or consultation is actively considered.
- The Neighbourhood Forums will provide a minimum of 3 open public meetings per annum including the Annual General Meeting.
- Special General Meeting will be required when petitioned by not less than 2% but no more than 10% of the population aged 16 or over.

D. Election arrangements

- There will be a requirement that election arrangements are seen as fair and impartial and comply with BANF guidance.

E. Management Committee arrangements

- The organisation has provision for a management committee or similar of at least six members and no more than 15 members. If management committee membership is less than the number provision is made for, the organisation allows the vacant places to be filled if possible.
- The management committee members are individuals living within the boundary.
- All management committee members are selected by a vote that takes place every 9 -15 months and should preferably follow an annual cycle.
- There will be a minimum of four management committee meetings per annum.

F. BANF membership

- Delegates to the BANF Association are encouraged to be management committee members of their own Neighbourhood Forum. (Others can attend BANF Association meetings as observers on behalf of individual forums with the notification of the BANF chair.)
- Forums may relinquish membership or inactive Forum's membership may be withdrawn by the Association.
- Neighbourhood Forums must submit its reports, including financial statements, as reported to the Neighbourhood Forums own annual general meeting.
- Forums must act within the general ethos of the membership requirements and not bring BANF into disrepute through their actions.

G. The benefits of affiliation to BANF

- Forum members will be able to send up to two delegates to Association meetings and play a role in determining Association policy.
- Forum delegates can stand for the BANF management committee.
- Forum delegates can vote for those standing for the BANF management committee.
- BANF will advise the City Council planning service to send planning applications to the Forum contact person, enabling Forums to monitor planning issues and respond if required, including taking up issues of "planning gain" where appropriate.
- BANF will be support Forums in carrying out their representational role with the local authority, and other statutory and non statutory bodies.
- BANF will provide Forums with advice and assistance to directly access a range of funding and other resources.

- Forums will be able to utilise the facilities at the Neighbourhood Forums Resource Centre.
- Forums can describe themselves as being 'BANF members', for example in funding applications, indicating they fulfil the BANF membership criteria.
- BANF will take forward the agreed views of the Association to any relevant organisation.
- BANF will mandate the payment of local authority grants to Forums as applicable at the current time.



Association Meetings

These take place eight times a year, on a Tuesday evening usually in a central location.

Every Neighbourhood Forum is entitled to send two delegates to the meetings. The neighbourhood Forum should also nominate two substitute delegates.

The Association meetings act as a policy and decision-making body of BANF.

The Association meeting also provides an opportunity for Neighbourhood Forums to come together from across the city to share, exchange experiences, ideas and network.



Complaints Procedure

Introduction

From time to time Neighbourhood Forums, and the Birmingham Association of Neighbourhood Forums receive complaints concerning the functioning of individual Neighbourhood Forums and their officers. This complaints procedure provides a framework with which such complaints will be processed. The complaint should be considered in relation to the BANF membership policy or similar

1. The responsibility for establishing, supporting and overseeing the functioning of individual Neighbourhood Forums rests with the Birmingham Association of Neighbourhood Forums.
2. Neighbourhood Forums seek to provide a voice and represent the interests of the community they serve. They are run and managed by local citizens. They are **primarily** accountable to local citizens.
3. It is also recognised that, on a voluntary basis, citizens who become Neighbourhood Forum officers have taken on a wide range of responsibilities with a view to improving the quality of life in their local communities. In dealing with complaints, the emphasis will be to **support** officers to carry out their duties more efficiently.

Making a Complaint

Citizens will normally want a speedy resolution and this is best done by encouraging the citizen to submit their complaint directly to the Neighbourhood Forum concerned. They should be given the leaflet 'Neighbourhood Forums - How to Complain'.

Citizens, however, shall have the right to complain directly to the Birmingham Association of Neighbourhood Forums where:

- a) they have referred the matter to the Neighbourhood Forum but disagree with the outcome.
- b) it is inappropriate for the Neighbourhood Forum to consider the complaint

The complaint should normally be in writing. If a verbal complaint, the Birmingham Association of Neighbourhood Forums will produce a written statement and ask the complainant to confirm that this represents their concerns and desired outcome.

The management committee may invoke the complaints procedure on receipt of any information it receives.

The Management Committee has the right to determine the validity of the complaint.

Birmingham Association of Neighbourhood Forums

Complaints Procedure

On receipt of any complaint the chair will immediately ask the Neighbourhood Forum to respond and attempt to mediate between the two parties. Where this is not possible the Chair will:

1. Convene a complaints panel.
2. The complaints panel will consist of three people (one person drawn from the BANF management committee and two people drawn from a pool of people determined by an Association meeting).
3. Give both the complainant and the Neighbourhood Forum the opportunity to address the panel.
4. Where both parties agree use the panel as a mediation meeting.
5. The decision of the panel will be:
 - a) that the complaint is not upheld and no further action taken.
 - b) that the complaint is upheld and that appropriate action is taken.
6. If the Neighbourhood Forum or complainant(s) disagrees with the decision of the complaints panel they will have the right for the case to be heard by a management committee meeting excluding any management committee members sitting on the complaints panel.
7. If the decision of the complaints panel is upheld by the BANF management committee meeting the Neighbourhood Forum shall be given the opportunity to comply with its decision where appropriate.
8. Where the BANF management committee takes measures against the wishes of the Neighbourhood Forum a report on actions taken and the reason for this action will be presented to a future Association.

Sanctions

Experience already shows that BANF is faced with a wide range of different complaints. This will mean that the complaints panel/management committee will need to be able to apply a wide range of actions.

As already stated, the emphasis will be: advice and guidance with the Neighbourhood Forum being encouraged to comply with the decision.

However, there will be occasions when the complaints panel/management committee acting on behalf of the Association will need to temporarily suspend that Neighbourhood Forum's affiliation/membership of BANF. BANF may become involved in supporting the Neighbourhood Forum through mutual agreement. Any period of suspension will not exceed three months.

A Neighbourhood Forum can be expelled by the Association on recommendation from the management committee for any substantiated complaint.



Neighbourhood Forum Guidance Manual

Useful Forms

Sign in sheet

Lamp post forms

Street Champion Report form

Neighbourhood Forum Guidance Manual



Index

Index

