

WEST Lothian WRITERS CONSTITUTION

NAME: The name of the group will be “West Lothian Writers” (referred to later as “the group”)

AREA OF OPERATION: West Lothian shall, for the purposes of this Constitution, be the area of benefit. The group is based in Livingston.

AIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The aim of the group is to advance the development and enjoyment of creative writing amongst local people.
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To support the development of and interest in creative writing in West Lothian and the encouragement of local talent.• To provide workshops which enable individuals to develop their own writing across a variety of writing forms; poetry, drama, film script, short story and novel.• To support the principles of equality and to mutually support the work of writers at all levels and from all backgrounds, race or ethnicity, disability, gender or sexual orientation, age or religion.• To recognise the role of the arts in promoting wellbeing, social participation and personal development.• To make and maintain links with other organisations with similar aims and objectives (e.g. writers groups, arts organisations, community groups and further education colleges.)• To promote, where possible, the work of group members.

GROUP MEMBERSHIP: Membership of the group will be open to any interested person who lives, works or studies in West Lothian and is in agreement with the group’s stated aims and objectives.

Registration: all members on joining will complete a registration form. They will receive a copy of the constitution and shall be deemed to accept the terms and conditions contained therein.

Membership Fees: the level of membership fees and/or charges shall be determined and reviewed at each Annual General Meeting.

Data Protection: Members consent to the Secretary holding their contact details on a database and to receiving emails from the Secretary regarding news relevant to the group. The group will not share membership contact details with any other organisation for any reason.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM): The group shall in each year hold an AGM, and shall specify the meeting as such in the notices calling it. The AGM shall be held within three calendar months after the end of the group's financial year. The AGM shall be held at such place and time as the group shall decide. The Secretary shall call for a chair to be elected by majority vote at the start of the AGM, for the duration of that meeting.

Notice of Annual General Meetings: The AGM shall be advertised by e-mail to members two weeks prior to such general meeting.

AGM Agenda: the AGM Agenda shall be in the following form or as near to as circumstances permit:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of previous meeting
3. Report from the chair
4. Report from the treasurer
5. Election of office-bearers (chair, secretary and treasurer)
6. Plans for the year ahead.
7. Any other competent business (of which prior notice has been given).

AGM Voting: At annual general meetings, only members present may vote. Voting shall be by show of hands or by ballot, at the discretion of the Chair.

In order that decisions are made by a fair representation of the group a minimum of six members (including all three office-bearers) must be present for the AGM to be deemed quorate. Office-bearers will have the casting vote in the event of a tie.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: The management committee must comprise a minimum of all three office-bearers and an unlimited number of group members. All members of the group have the right to join the management committee.

Role of the Management Committee: the management committee's role is to provide advice and input to the group's activities.

The management committee will meet no less than two times per year and at each meeting the Secretary will call for the election of a chair for the duration of that meeting.

In order that decisions are made by a fair representation of the management committee, a minimum of three members (including all three office-bearers) must be present for the meeting to be deemed quorate. Office bearers will have the casting vote in the event of a tie.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS: All minutes shall be open to inspection by members and should be approved as an accurate record at the following meeting.

Minutes shall be used for recording decisions, giving insight into why decisions were made and letting those who were not present familiarise themselves with what went on. For all of this, it will not be necessary to record everything, attach a speaker's name to everything that is said, or list every reason for and against a decision.

OFFICE-BEARERS: The group shall elect a chair, secretary and treasurer at the Annual General Meeting of the group.

Given the voluntary nature and small size of the group there will be some overlap in responsibilities, but the individual roles and responsibilities of office-bearers are described as follows:

Role of the Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To lead the group and make sure that the work of the group is done in the most efficient and effective way.
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate the planning of the group’s activities for the year ahead and plan for the group’s future. Take charge of the delegation of responsibilities, making sure that they are spread out equitably amongst the Management Committee. Chair the fortnightly meetings, encouraging participation and making sure that they run smoothly (this role can also be taken by other group members) Lead, in consultation with the other office-bearers, with the arranging of external tutors. Lead in promoting the aims and objectives of the group with other bodies and relevant individuals, exploring opportunities for partnership working.

Role of the Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make sure that the administration of the group stays on track.
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record the minutes of all meetings, making sure that all actions are duly noted. Prepare, in consultation with the other office-bearers, the agendas for Management Committee meetings and Annual General Meetings. Send out regular emails to group members regarding meetings and other news. Acts as a first point of contact for potential new group members. Deputise for chair and treasurer when required. Maintain and monitor a calendar of important dates for the group such as grant application deadlines and the updating of details on arts directories. Maintain an accurate database of member’s contact information. Keep all the records of the group in a safe place and in good order.

Role of the Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To manage and report on group finances.
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that robust financial policies are being followed. • Report to the Management Committee and general membership on finances. • Collect fortnightly meeting fees from members. • Prepare any required financial reporting and funding application forms. • Take the lead in identifying any potential sources of funding. • Maintain the group bank account. • Oversee all financial transactions.

FINANCE: All monies raised by or on behalf of the group shall be applied to further the aims and objectives of the group and for no other purpose. No payments shall be made to office-bearers, except for reimbursement of outlays incurred for the benefit of the organisation.

BANK ACCOUNT: A bank account shall be maintained in the name of the group with a bank or building society. The Management Committee shall authorise two members of the Management Committee, one of whom shall be treasurer, to sign cheques on behalf of the organisation. All cheques must be signed by not less than two authorised signatories. All expenditure over £60.00 must be sanctioned by a meeting of the Management Committee.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION: Any resolution to alter this Constitution will be submitted to the group in writing one week before the AGM takes place. Any such resolution must be passed by a two-thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.

DISSOLUTION: If the Management Committee should decide, by a simple majority, that dissolution of the group is necessary or advisable; the Management Committee shall call a meeting of all the members. Twenty-eight days notice of such meetings shall: a) be emailed to all members; b) be posted in a conspicuous place or places in the area of benefit. If such decision to dissolve be confirmed by at least two thirds majority of those present and voting at the meeting then, after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, the assets shall not be paid or distributed to the members, but shall be given to such other charitable organisations with objects similar to those of the organisation, as the organisation may decide. The association shall then be declared dissolved.

SCOTTISH LAW: This constitution shall be interpreted according to Scottish Law. This constitution was originally adopted as the constitution of West Lothian Writers at a meeting held in West Lothian College on 27 February 2006, and a revised version was subsequently adopted at a meeting held in Carmondean Community Education Centre on Tuesday 22 April 2008.