



BRAINTREE DISTRICT INTERFAITH FORUM

CONSTITUTION

1. Name

The Association will be known as the “BRAINTREE DISTRICT INTERFAITH FORUM”, referred to in this document as “B-DIFF”.

2. Mission

To build unity and influence out of diversity.

3. Aims

3.1. To bring together members of different Faith Communities for dialogue in order to deepen understanding, to reduce prejudice and to promote unity within diversity.

3.2. To reach out together to the wider community of the Braintree District, encouraging recognition of the relevance of a spiritual dimension for the well-being of the whole community and promoting education in the values which are fundamental to each Faith Community and which they hold in common.

3.3. To interact with civic authorities and other statutory and voluntary bodies, enabling the Faith Communities (as far as possible) to speak with one voice on civic and social concerns and to respond jointly to opportunities and needs within the wider community.

4. Membership

4.1 Membership of B-DIFF shall be open to those who

(i) are members of any of the faiths listed in Appendix 1, or who declare themselves to be persons of faith and satisfy the Executive that this is the case; and

(ii) live, work or worship in the Braintree District, agree with the Aims of B-DIFF and agree to abide by its Code of Conduct (Appendix 2).

4.2 Membership of B-Diff shall also be open to those who do not live, work or worship within the Braintree District, but otherwise fulfil conditions 4.1 and have no alternative interfaith association convenient for them to attend meetings.

4.3 Provided they are satisfied that conditions 4.1 and 4.2 above are fulfilled, the Executive shall only refuse an application for membership if, acting reasonably and properly, they consider it to be in the best interests of B-DIFF to do so.

4.4. All registered members are entitled to participate in discussions, vote at General Meetings and other Forum meetings and stand for election to the Executive or to be Officers of B-DIFF.

4.5. Membership fees (if any) shall be determined at a General Meeting.

5. Officers and Executive Group

5.1. The honorary Officers of B-DIFF shall be:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer

5.2. Nominations for these offices shall be sought at least twenty-one days before the General Meeting at which the nominations will be placed before the members..

5.3. There shall be an Executive Group consisting of the Officers and at least two but not more than eight other individuals.

5.4. Nominations for officers and other Executive Group members should enable B-DIFF to achieve the widest possible representation on the Executive Group of the faith groups within B-DIFF.

5.5. The Officers and the Executive Group shall be elected annually at a General Meeting, and shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting.

5.6. Election of Officers and members of the Executive Group may also take place at ordinary Forum meetings, to fill casual vacancies or those caused by a previous shortage of candidates. Those so elected shall hold office until the conclusion of the following General Meeting.

5.7. The Executive Group may co-opt others whose insights, skills or experience will assist B-DIFF in the achievement of its aims.

5.7. The term of office automatically terminates if any individual:

- a) is persistently absent from meetings without good reason:
- b) resigns by written notice to the Chairperson (or in the case of the resignation of the Chairperson, to the Secretary:
- c) ceases to be a member of B-DIFF.

6. Meetings

6.1. Forum meetings shall be open to the general public and shall be held at least twice each calendar year in order to promote one or more of the Aims of B-DIFF. The theme, format and content of Forum meetings shall be set by the Executive Group. The meeting will be led by the Chairperson or the Vice Chairperson.

6.2. The Executive Group shall meet between Forum meetings, to review previous events or projects, to plan future events or projects, to manage finance and publicity, and as necessary to set the theme, format, content and/or Agenda for Forum meetings.

6.3. A General Meeting, led by the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson, shall be held at least once during each calendar year (the Annual General Meeting or AGM) and on other occasions if deemed appropriate by the Executive Group. General Meetings may be included within a Forum meeting. Members shall receive at least 21 days notice of a General Meeting. Only registered members of B-DIFF are eligible to vote during a General Meeting. The Agenda of the AGM shall include the presentation and adoption of the Minutes of the previous AGM, the Minutes of any other General Meeting since the previous AGM, the Annual Report, the Treasurer's Report, and the Election of the officers and the Executive Group. Whenever possible agreement shall be reached by consensus or a show of hands. If more nominations are received than there are positions to be filled the election shall be by secret ballot.

6.4 The Quorum for the Executive Group shall be half of the group, including at least one of the officers. The Quorum at a General Meeting shall be one-third of registered members.

6.5 If a Quorum is not present at a General Meeting to resolve a duly-notified Agenda item, those present may authorize the Executive Group to arrange an alternative voting method for all members (proxy, email or other suitable means). The result shall be notified to all members within 28 days after the relevant General Meeting.

6.6. The secretary shall maintain Minutes of Executive and General Meetings, including the results of alternative voting methods authorized under clause 6.5.

7. Finance

The Executive Group shall be responsible for keeping proper financial records for the period between each Annual General Meeting. The Treasurer shall maintain a bank account in the name of B-DIFF. Bank account payments shall be signed by two of four appointed signatories, which include the Treasurer.

8. Changes to the Constitution

8.1. Changes to the Constitution shall be made at a formally-convened General Meeting and require a two-thirds majority of members present and voting. An alternative voting method may be authorized if necessary (see 6.5 to 6.6).

8.2. Proposed changes to the Constitution shall be made known to all members with the notice of the General Meeting.

9. Dissolution

9.1 The decision to dissolve B-DIFF shall be made by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the membership at a Special General Meeting convened for that purpose. Such a meeting requires a notice period of twenty-one days. An alternative voting method may be authorized if necessary (see 6.5 to 6.6). On dissolution, the assets of B-DIFF shall be transferred to a body with purposes and aims similar to those of B-DIFF.

9.2. If the members resolve to dissolve B-DIFF, the Executive Group shall be responsible for winding up the affairs of B-DIFF, and shall remain in office until that task is completed.

Print Name: Rana Walker Signature: _____
 Chairperson

Print Name: Debbie Sefton Signature: _____
 Vice Chairperson

Date: Approved at the General Meeting on October 25th 2016

APPENDIX 1

This Act of Commitment was enacted as the Millennium Pledge, made by the leaders of nine faith communities in the Palace of Westminster on 3 January 2000.

The faith communities comprised the Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, and Zoroastrian faiths

An Act of Commitment

In a world scarred by the evils of war, racism, injustice and poverty, we offer this joint Act of Commitment as we look to our shared future.

We commit ourselves,
as people of many faiths,
to work together
for the common good.
uniting to build a better society,
grounded in the values and ideas we share:

community
personal integrity
a sense of right and wrong,
learning, wisdom and love of truth,

care and compassion,
justice and peace,
respect for one another,
for the earth and its creatures.

We commit ourselves,
in a spirit of friendship and co-operation,
to work together
alongside all who share our values and ideals,
to help bring about a better world
now and for generations to come.

APPENDIX 2

Code of Conduct

- Members will be sensitive, courteous and considerate of the beliefs and practices of others
- Members will respect the right of others to disagree
- Members will be just as good listeners as they are speakers
- Members will refrain from promoting their own religion in a way that causes offence or makes other members feel uncomfortable.

Members are also encouraged to familiarize themselves with the statement “**Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs**”, published by the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom.

Permission to refer to and reproduce this statement has been given by IFNUK on condition that it is quoted in full.

<http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications/essential-publications>